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THE  
PRIDE OF ANCESTRY:

OR,  
*WHO IS SHE?*

A Novel,  
IN FOUR VOLUMES.

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BY MRS. THOMSON,

AUTHOR OF  
EXCESSIVE SENSIBILITY—FATAL FOLLIES—  
THE LABYRINTHS OF LIFE—GERALDINE—  
AND ROBERT AND ADELA, &c.

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VOL. III.

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THE

# PRIDE OF ANCESTRY;

OR,

*WHO IS SHE?*

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## CHAPTER XVIII.

NO sooner were the contents of the important letter perused by Miss Moore, than she gave it to Helen, saying, at the same time, "My dear, you shall judge for yourself; it is a perplexing case."

Helen read and re-read the letter containing the subject of doubt. But e'er she had ended, all doubt was at an end with her. She said to Miss Moore, with streaming eyes, "Oh! madam!

a mother waits anxiously to take me to her heart!—then let us go directly—I long to see her—I feel that I am right; do not refuse me the satisfaction of beholding a parent.”—Miss Moore replied, that certainly she had no authority to detain her from going to whom she pleased, but must advise caution in an affair of so much moment to her future happiness. However, she would not oppose her acting as she thought proper, only she should exact a promise from her that the most profound secrecy should be observed, until all doubt was effectually done away.

To this request Helen very readily gave her assent.

Miss Moore was in truth herself staggered as to the story of her ward's being the daughter of Lord and Lady Delmore. She could not contradict it; and if true, and Lady Levet had been a confidante of that family, it accounted

ed

ed for her never hinting at the name of the parents of Miss Bellingham, as Lord Delmore's death happened about the same time with that of Lady Levet's. It was also true that she had never actually said that her parents were dead, though Miss Moore had believed so by her never saying more than that she had had a particular esteem for them.

She was particularly sorry that the Doctor had deferred answering that part of the letter which related to her own concerns. However, she determined, before she left Brighton, to decide as to becoming the wife of Mr. Allright, as a short time might deprive her of the guardianship of Helen, who might, by further circumstances, be convinced, beyond a doubt, as to her real parents, and be, by Lady Delmore, taken from her care; and if so, the good Alderman might demur in again offering her his hand, though by

this occurrence she would be more at liberty, and certainly find it more advantageous to take upon her the superintendence of his family. This determination made her the more particular in exacting a promise of secrecy from Helen, which extended for the present even to the family in which they then resided. As they had for some time spoken of returning home, their doing so in a few days would not be any matter of surprise; nor would their staying a week or two in London on their return, as they intended, be enquired into.

It was the first concealment that Helen had ever had with her friend, Caroline, in any matter of moment. She felt it very irksome; but as she had given her solemn word of honour, (though she could not divine why it was exacted) she determined to observe a profound silence. She was  
glad

glad the family were absent when the letter from Carleton arrived ; as no question would be asked concerning its contents.

The Dallings were sorry to hear of a separation, but hoped to meet again at Bentley Abbey, as Helen had promised a visit there. It was soon spread abroad, that Miss Bellingham had determined on quitting Brighton in a few days. Lady Clifden and her sisters were delighted with the news, as then Mrs. Dalling was likely to depart for the Abbey, and the admiration of the other sex, when they were gone, might be directed towards themselves.

Miss Allight, at dinner, observed that they should be quite dull when the party broke up. This roused their father's attention to enquire what party she meant ?

“ Why, the Dallings and Miss Bellingham are going to leave us in a few  
B 3 days,

days, Sir," said his daughter. "Have'nt you heard of this before? all the men are going to put on mourning."

The Banker was a little surprized that he should be the last who had had the information of their departure, and therefore hardly gave credit to the news: but yet he was not quite easy to remain in doubt, thinking that if he let them off now, the Heiress might not be so easily removed to St. Mary Axe; as she might dispose of herself before the next spring, when he went down to the Grove.—He determined to see Miss Moore before she left Brighton, and know her determination respecting his proposals. He therefore sent a note requesting that she would permit him to wait on her on the next morning, at any hour she should appoint.

This was exactly what she herself would have wished; and knowing that a party  
had



had been made for an airing on the Downs at twelve, she appointed that hour to see Mr. Allright, and excused herself from accompanying them, and waited the arrival of her lover ; fully determined not to be cruel, if he urged her to a determination.

The Alderman used many weighty reasons why he should no longer be put off ; offering, in the most handsome manner, to leave all family arrangements to herself, and her fair friend, whom it would make him happy to receive as an inmate of his house.

Miss Moore made some stipulations on her part ; to all of which Mr. Allright readily agreed ; one of these was, that, as they were both advanced in years, no talk should be made of the intended union, which might take place during the few days they meant to stay in town ; to which place Mr. Allright could pretend that he was called

by business, and remove for a few days, leaving the Ladies at Brighton under the protection of their sister Clifden, and to which place he might return when she went to Carleton, where he might follow with his daughters, after he had informed them of the alteration in his family, which had taken place.

Nothing could be more happily arranged. Mr. Allright thought and believed, that this was but the prelude to the union of Frank and the Heiress, whom, he considered, by this beginning, to be almost engaged to unite herself with his family. Love had little to do in this courtship. It was a fair account of profit and loss. Interest on both sides was the motive that determined the union. Mr. Allright knew that Miss Moore was a woman of good family, and irreproachable character, and that he actually wanted such a female to preside over his concerns,

cerns, and take charge, and a controul, if allowed, over his unmanageable girls. He also knew that she was possessed of a sufficiency to answer all additional expenditure on her account. Therefore, he could not lose by the match, and he might gain. Nothing was to be done without a little speculation. So he thought this promised to turn to good account.

The Lady also knew, that the Banker was rich, and that if Miss Bellingham married, as doubtles she would, his house would be very desirable, as a residence for herself, being in the vicinity of the Lodge. Now she had another excitement to a speedy determination ; affairs began to assume a serious aspect, and she was threatened with loosing her ward altogether, if the claims of Lady Delmore were well founded.

Dr. Jackson had given it as his opinion that she would be found to be the

daughter of Lord Delmore, and such a coincidence in circumstances, led her to think it might be so. Though she could not at all account for the conduct of Lady Levet, yet on opening the papers her Ladyship might explain all to their entire satisfaction. Therefore, as her fortune, and the disposal of it, was to rest with herself, why she ran no risque in taking the offer of the Banker, with all his incumbrances.

After a tête à tête of two hours, in the course of which Mr. Allright had given Miss Moore to understand that he had not forgotten the winning ways he had practised in his youth ; they agreed upon all the preliminaries. He was to leave Brighton a day or two, if possible, before them, and to prepare every thing previous to their arrival. He took charge of providing a house for their reception, and after engaging himself to meet Miss Moore at the rooms  
that

that evening, he took his leave, and returned home, highly satisfied with the termination of the business of that day. He never once troubled himself as to the vexation and disappointment he was preparing for his family, by his union with Miss Moore. He only considered the advantage that would accrue to the house by the accession of the fortune of Helen, when she should, by his finesse and good management, be united to Frank; who was, at this time, much in his father's good graces, as he had remained quietly in town, and had not pestered him for any advance of cash.

Miss Moore now determined to acquaint Helen with the step she was about to take; it being proper that she should be informed of it. At the same time she determined to act consistently with her duty, and the trust reposed in her by her deceased friend, by mak-

ing, as proposed by Mr. Allright, an offer of Miss Bellingham's residing with her, till the expiration of the term when the packet should be opened, and she put in possession of the secret of her birth, and also her fortune.

It was not until the next morning, that Miss Moore could find an opportunity to deposit her secret in the bosom of Helen, who's surprize could not be concealed. She had heard many people joke both Mr. Allright and the Lady on the subject, but that either of them, at their time of life, should think of marriage, she never thought possible. However, Helen knew but little of the world, and less of its politics, else she might not have thought it so wonderful. Miss Moore was certainly pretty far advanced in life, but not so far that she might not take an advantageous offer when presented to her. She was not much on the wrong side of forty : her  
lover,

lover, to be sure, had nearly twenty years the start of her. This it was, that surprized Helen the most, as his children were, she thought, an obstacle to his marrying again, if his age was not so. However, Miss Moore was competent to judge for herself, and she heartily wished her to be happily settled, having experienced the greatest attention and kindness from her ever since they had met. She would have been under much grief and embarrassment as to her future settlement, had she not hoped to find a parent in Lady Delmore, who would relieve her mind from all anxiety. It must be owned that Miss Moore was guilty of a small degree of simulation, when she assured Helen, that it was this hope that had determined her the more readily to accept the Banker's offer. She then informed her, how all arrangements were made, and that nothing was to transpire

pire until after the wedding had taken place ; which was to be conducted as secretly as possible. Miss Moore said, that as it was a match of friendship, she would wish to avoid all the ill-natured and foolish comments of the world.

It may well be conceived that Helen longed to be communicative to her friend Caroline, and to have a laugh with her at the antiquated lovers : but no such thing was possible consistently with her word pledged, not to drop a hint on the subject. She therefore now wished that the day of departure was come on all accounts, and employed the intermediate time in taking leave of friends, and arranging her little concerns.

Every one regretted that the party would so soon be broken up, but no one felt the force of the separation so much as Mr. Gower. He had been of all their parties, both public and private, and



and was every day better confirmed in the good opinion of Helen he had at first adopted. Indeed, this had now assumed a more interesting form, and friendship was fast ripening into affection in the breast of Mr. Gower. He was perfectly decided as to his own wishes, but not so as to the propriety of making them known, in his situation, which was certainly, in point of worldly wisdom, very far from being equal to that of the lady whom he so much admired. Nor had he so much of the fop of the present day in his composition, as to reckon on a fine person, and a very high character in his profession, deservedly acquired, as equivalent to any thing that could be brought into the scale in point of beauty or wealth. Besides, the undefined state in which Miss Bellingham stood, might have emboldened him, had he not been possessed of uncommon  
diffi-

diffidence and sensibility of disposition. However, what he durst not declare, had already been evident to the young lady herself, who had secretly given him credit for all that was desirable in the male character, and wished, for she went no farther, that it might be her lot, if ever she changed her present state, to find so amiable a mate as Mr. Gower. At present she sighed to think all ideas of this kind must be banished, as she belonged to no one; though if the present claims were established, she might have a parent to direct her future choice. Perhaps on quitting Brighton, she might bid adieu to her friend Gower for ever. She still believed that he would sometimes think of those hours passed in her society, but she was fearful that her unhappy situation precluded the only man she ever thought seriously of, from declaring his  
senti-

sentiments, otherwise than by those marked attentions which are easily understood by the object so addressed.

At length the morning came when she was to quit her friends, in order to appear before strangers, who might, or might not, be interesting to her future life, and she shed many tears on the bosom of her friend Caroline, when she pressed her to her own at parting.

She promised if she still continued mistress of her own actions, to see her at Bentley Abbey very soon. She could say no more, at that time, though she had determined, in the event of Miss Moore's marriage, to spend much of her time in Mrs. Dalling's family.

The Banker left Brighton the day before them, and was to prepare every thing for the reception of his bride elect.

Nothing

Nothing of moment passed during their journey to London. They drove to Lord Clifden's house, where Mr. Allright was ready to receive them, and to conduct the Ladies to one in the same street, hired for their temporary accommodation.

Miss Moore had convinced Helen of the propriety of her conduct in giving her hand to Mr. Allright. Now that she found it convenient to reconcile the young lady to the step, she seemed to believe that Lady Delmore might be the mother of Miss Bellingham, and, if so, she would pass into her family, and all farther attendance, on her part, would be unnecessary.

Helen allowed her argument to be a just one, and sincerely longed for the day which was to bring Lady Delmore to town.

Her journey was retarded by an indisposition occasioned by severe maternal

ternal anxiety. She would have instantly gone down to Brighton from Dr. Jackson's, had not her brother dissuaded her from the step, saying, it would give too much publicity to the affair, which ought to be managed with as much delicacy as possible on both their accounts.

Lady Delmore acknowledged the justice of the remark, and resolved, however painful, to wait the arrival of Miss Bellingham in town, which would not have been delayed an hour on her part; but as Miss Moore was to determine, and also had some important points to arrange as to her own future prospects, why she made it convenient to these.

Miss Moore had shewn all possible attention, such as writing herself to Lady Delmore, and giving her all the information of which she was mistress.—

Though

Though this amounted to no more, nor indeed to so much, as she had received from Mrs. Linworth, and the poor woman to whom she had been directed by her. Miss Moore appointed a particular day when they should wait at home to see her Ladyship. She received a letter the very day they arrived in town, saying, that however painful to all parties, their meeting must be delayed, as indisposition prevented its taking place according to the anxiety and wishes of Lady Delmore.

Mr. Allright had not heard any mention, for some time, of the application for information, as to the birth of Helen ; and as he wished it might drop entirely, he forbore making any enquiries. A renewal of the subject might again awaken, in the mind of the young lady, a desire of farther investigation.

He

He believed that the only reason of Miss Moore's removal to town, was to facilitate their approaching union ; and wishing nothing so much as that it was well over, without any of his own family suspecting what was going on ; why he hurried over all the forms of the law necessary in these cases ; and the third evening he presented himself and his lawyer at Miss Moore's tea-table ; after which all business was adjusted. A licence being procured, they repaired, accompanied by this same lawyer, who was to give the bride to her enamoured swain, and Miss Bellingham, to St. George's, Hanover-Square, from which they returned man and wife.

Every thing was conducted with the utmost decorum and secrecy, no one but the parties present suspected what was going forward.

Mrs.

Mrs. Allright declined taking possession of her own house for a few days, having very particular reasons for remaining where she then was.

The good Alderman knew too well what was due to a bride to contradict her, for at least the first week of the honey-moon; so he forbore to urge what he found the Ladies had determined should not be.

The grand point settled, secrecy, as to Helen's situation, was now no longer necessary, and, in the holy state into which Mrs. Allright was but just entered, it would be a crime to make any concealments. Besides, it was impossible that Lady Delmore's visit could be managed so that Mr. Allright should not be acquainted with the purport of it, she therefore determined to make a virtue of necessity, and to open her  
mind



mind to her dear Mr. Allright, whose great tenderness and affection towards her deserved every requital in her power.

## CHAP. XIX.

THE Banker's mind was now engrossed with the manner in which he was to make this very material change known to his family, and also how he was to reconcile the ladies to each other; for this step was absolutely necessary to the accomplishing his grand plan, (to which his union was subservient, and only preparatory) that of making Miss Bellingham an inmate in his house, and promoting a union between her and Frank, which would bring her fortune into his bank. He had revolved, and abandoned numerous plans, when his son entered the  
room

room to congratulate him on his return to town, and to enquire after the rest of the family : to all which enquiries he received a most gracious answer. Frank enquired next after Miss Moore and Helen, with the Dalling family ; Mrs. Lavington, and in short, all the ladies he could recollect were of the Brighton party. His father replied, they were all well ; and that Miss Moore and Miss Bellingham were also in town ; but that the former lady had changed her name very lately. “ Married ! ” asked Frank, “ who ! — Miss Bellingham, did you say, Sir ? ” “ No, Sir,” answered the father, “ I did not say Miss Bellingham—I hope to see her your wife if you deserve her.” Here Frank burst out into a fit of laughter, bowing to his father, and exclaimed “ Who has ventured upon that antiquated piece of furniture, the parson or the schoolmaster ? ” “ Restrain,” said Mr. Allright, “ any insolent remarks on the

propriety of the Lady's character ; for I wish at once to inform you *she is my wife*. As such, Sir, I expect you will receive her." The Alderman had perfectly silenced his son, who stood in astonishment and disbelief at his father's assertion. However, he ventured once more to ask if his father was not joking ? He assured him that he was not, and that according as his children acted on this occasion, he should consider them whenever they should need his assistance in any settlement they might choose, and he approve. This speech had its weight with Frank, and he began to consider that as his father had been silly enough to enter into such an engagement at his time of life, the one now made carried the least folly with it. He might have married a young girl who probably would have spent his fortune, and have rendered him ridiculous if not worse. Besides, he had another argument nearer

nearer his heart, which was the bait held out by his father, that he would not be too scrupulous when he himself should ask his sanction on the same occasion, though there was a clause in his speech that Frank did not wish to enter too deeply into such as "they might choose and he approve," which implied a match of strict propriety and prudence.

Frank did not hesitate as soon as he could bring his countenance into proper composure, to assure his father that certainly he had no right to object to what made his happiness. He then desired to know when and where he should wait on Mrs. Allright to offer his congratulations. The Banker considered this as a good omen, not doubting when his son so readily acknowledged his mother-in-law, but the ladies would make a virtue of necessity, and do the same; so he de-

terminated, not chusing to run the gauntlet again at Brighton, to introduce Frank to the ladies, and then dispatch him down to announce the happy tidings to his sisters, and escort them to town in order to do homage also to their new mamma. He therefore told his son that he should return with him to the west end of the town to dine with the ladies, and then he said he might have an opportunity of renewing his acquaintance and furthering his suit with the Heiress, of whom Mr. Allright was by no means sparing of his encomiums. "She will now reside with us," said he, "and so I'll warrant if you make good use of your time, she will bear our name before the paper is opened ; for it does not signify waiting to know Who She Is, we know that the estate is hers ; and what matters it whether she be the old woman's daughter or her cook's, so she be  
what

what I know her to be; both good and rich." Some few months back, Frank would have been in raptures to have heard his father's harangue in favour of Helen, but he had now fixed his affections on another Helen of his own choosing in the person of Miss Hervey, the lady whom he met descending from the Gosport stage coach some weeks ago.

As he found that his father, now upwards of sixty years of age, had still a corner in his own heart, which led him to acknowledge the power of almighty love, it might be the proper time to soften him to admit the force of that passion in the breast of others, which he found so predominant in his own. But he did not know how to get over his father's predilection in favour of the Heiress, or rather of that of her fortune, especially as his mistress was not rich in any thing equiva-

lent to Lady Levet's estate in the Banker's ideas. Chance, which decides in weightier matters, whether we will or no, he thought might bring that about which he at present had not sufficient courage to mention. Perhaps by assiduity he might get so far into the good graces of his lady mother, that she might bring the matter about. This wish was no sooner formed than it was abandoned. Was she not the guardian and friend of her whom his father destined, if possible, should unite her fate with his? and no doubt but the plan had been settled between them that was to accomplish both their wishes. So he e'en went to dress, and determined to make himself as merry as he could at the expence of the antient lovers. No great loss was to be expected by the union to himself; but he was in doubt how the girls might relish so prim a monitor.

During



During their drive to Grosvenor-street all matters were settled for the journey to Brighton ; and Frank enjoyed in idea the surprise he should create on his arrival. He was introduced in form by his father, and acted his part with great propriety, so well that when he took his leave early in the evening, his father shook his hand, and left in it a draft for fifty pounds, to defray the expence of the journey, desiring him to draw on the house to answer all expences incurred by his family.

Miss Bellingham sent her love to Mrs. Dalling, if she still remained at Brighton, and promised her a long letter in a day or two, which might perhaps surprize her a little. With this commission Frank took his leave to repair to another female, who, he did not doubt, would receive the news he had to communicate with some small astonishment.

As soon as he was gone Helen retired also, in order to write her promised letter to her friend, at least so much of it as related to the wedding of Miss Moore, and then to wait the visit of Lady Delmore, for giving the finish to her correspondence.

Mrs. Allright's mind was now occupied in considering in what manner it would be best to break to her husband the news of Lady Delmore's claim to her ward ; as she had seen, though silently, that the Alderman's views were not totally disinterested in his marriage with her. But she was come to that time of life not to scrutinize too minutely the motives of others, provided they perfectly coincided with her own views. The intelligence could be no longer delayed without her acknowledging a reluctance to informing Mr. Allright, and in doing so, might betray her, being aware that he had some selfish

selfish design. Mrs. Allright determined to appropriate the present evening to this subject, particularly as Miss Bellingham had agreed to join a party of her friends to the Haymarket theatre. Mr. Allright met them at dinner in great spirits, and lamented excessively that forms and customs did not allow of their accompanying her to the play. Miss Bellingham was not sorry to go without Mr. Allright; for all her friends considered the marriage in so laughable a light that she feared giving offence to Mrs. Allright, for whom she entertained the sincerest respect, though she could not by any means approve of this last step, and connect it with the general tenour of her conduct. It would have caused much more uneasiness to Helen had she not had a prospect of being soon removed into the family of a near and dear relation, and in this prospect only could

she account for this last step of her friend's.

Helen being gone with her party, and the happy pair left to enjoy the sweets of mutual converse, Mrs. All-right said, " I wish, my dear, that a few days were passed, and then we should be out of suspense; at least I I should, for indeed I fear I have been remiss enough not to mention a circumstance that may perhaps materially alter our future plans." Here she stopt to take breath, or to see how this prelude would be taken.

The Alderman began to rouze, for he had nearly forgotten himself when left tête-à-tête with his bride, and would have been soon sunk into his usual afternoon's nap, which, since his marriage, he had shifted off as well as he could. However, a circumstance forgotten to be mentioned, that was to derange any plan he had formed, boded

no

no good. He was of course awake in a moment, and requested to know what his beloved Maria meant ; as nothing was indifferent to him that concerned her. This compliment (which was certainly true, now that they were made one, and interest being his governing principle) made Mrs. Allright able to proceed, which she did circumstantially in what related to the Delmores.

No sooner had Mrs. Allright concluded her story, than the Alderman declared it all *fudge*, and that they had nothing to do with Miss Bellingham, nor should they. He supposed Lady Delmore had gotten a scanty jointure, and hearing that Miss Bellingham had a good fortune, thought it right to try and share it with her. "No! no! indeed," said he, "they may impose on a parcel of women, and"—Mrs. Allright found her sense and  
c 6. discretion

discretion about to be called in question, and some little indication that all was not at peace within, would in spite of bridal restraint, appear on her countenance.

The Alderman perceiving that he had almost gone too far, apologized, saying, "that to be sure, she was the best judge in all matters that concerned her ward. He could not, however, but feel indignation at people's wanting to separate them when no one certainly was so proper as his dear Maria to advise and direct the Heiress until the mystery was unfolded.

This concession restored all to its usual tranquillity, as Mrs. Allright feared, lest the Alderman might have reproached her with want of confidence in not consulting him, when the application was first made; for not doing of which she had her particular reasons.

They talked the matter calmly over;  
for

for Mr. Allright could not forget it. To lose the fortune, when he had taken the incumbrance, was, beyond measure, provoking. Frank might not have the same opportunity in Lady Delmore's house ; nay, other views might be formed. It could not be allowed, or at least, he hoped his lady would not suffer any alteration to take place during the time Miss Bellingham was to be considered a minor ; and if she did not, why Frank might make such an impression as could not be obliterated. He said Lady Delmore had certainly acknowledged herself an unprincipled woman, when she could impose a child on her husband that was not his ; and therefore her testimony was not to be credited without much consideration. However, as things then stood, he proposed writing to Doctor Jackson, and requesting him to come to town and consult what was best

best to be done, for the interest of the dear young lady, which he declared to be the sole cause of his anxiety.

Mrs. Allright agreed to request the presence of the good rector to aid her with his advice in so momentous an affair. She hardly knew how Miss Bellingham meant to act, as she had been totally silent on the subject, other than expressing her sincere wish that she might at length be put out of doubt, by being acknowledged by a parent so respectable as the one who had endeavoured to substantiate her claim.

In this state affairs were for two or three days, when Lady Delmore's arrival was announced, and also her intention of waiting on the ladies at one the next day. Agitated and wearied with suspense, Helen awaited the appointed hour, when her ladyship arrived in a very splendid carriage, attended by a young and very elegant woman.



woman. Her ladyship was no less affected than the ladies she came to visit. Lady Delmore sunk into the first seat that presented itself on her entrance. Miss Bellingham could hardly remain standing, but supported herself by leaning on the back of a chair. The young lady who accompanied Lady Delmore, was the only unembarrassed person of the whole party. She looked Helen over and over again, and not quite satisfied with this, she took up a glass that hung dangling to a ribbon round her neck. After a very short survey, she exclaimed, "I give you joy, my dear sweet friend; not a shadow of doubt remains on my mind." Then, familiarly approaching, "Helen," she said, "how happy you will be in such a mother."—"Happy indeed," returned Miss Bellingham, "if this were put beyond a doubt; but I know not how to approach her ladyship."—"Do'nt

“Don’t you?” replied Miss Ellis,  
“Oh dear!—I’ll lead you to her—  
don’t be afraid.” Then taking her  
hand, she led Helen towards Lady  
Delmore. Mrs. Allright was adminis-  
tering salts to her ladyship, who ap-  
peared almost insensible, until Miss  
Bellingham came near to her, when  
she clasped her round the neck, called  
her her dear, dear, Julietta, and said  
that no power on earth should ever di-  
vide her, and her charming daughter  
again. After the first emotions were  
subsided on both sides, Mrs. Allright,  
in a calm and dispassionate manner  
related all she knew or had heard ; and  
hoped that Lady Delmore would be  
satisfied with Miss Bellingham’s wait-  
ing the time specified in the will of her  
late respected friend, before she made  
any material alteration in her present  
establishment, unless she could pro-  
duce proofs incontrovertible, or more  
satisfactory.

satisfactory than those she had yet adduced.

This remonstrance threw her ladyship into a violent fit of tears. She related to them the conversation with the woman, who assured her that the nurse Miss Bellingham was placed with, bore the name of Mary Norris, and this was the name of the nurse, and also the village in which she had her own mother's declaration in her own hand-writing, where her dear Julietta was placed. This declaration put it beyond a doubt, in the mind of Helen, that Lord Delmore was her father, and she ascribed to interested motives, Mrs. Allright's affecting to doubt after such a proof. She therefore determined to throw herself into the arms of an amiable and affectionate parent; and under her protection await the development of the strange and mysterious conduct of Lady Levet.

By

By doing this, she did not forfeit any claim to the estates bequeathed to her, as the place of her residence had never been specified in any written paper by Lady Levet. It was true, she had said that she hoped Miss Moore would continue to live with her, but she had not specified that if Miss Moore removed into another family, she was bound to make this her home. These were thoughts that had often passed in her own mind, when she had hopes that she might find an affectionate parent in the lady, who was anxious also to meet in her a long lost child.

Mrs. Allright said, that whatever Lady Delmore or Miss Bellingham might determine in future, she must beg the young lady to remain where she then was, till her other guardian, Dr. Jackson, arrived; or till she had consulted Mr. Allright on the subject.

Lady Delmore persisted that they  
had

had been separated too long already; and said, that if her dear Julietta's sentiments accorded with her own, she would return with her in the carriage.

"Oh, dear! to be sure," said Miss Ellis, "how excessively cruel to attempt to separate such a mother and daughter! — she must go home with us, positively. Why I should go out of my senses to leave Miss Delmore behind us here in this dreary, dull house. Mr. Allright can have no possible voice in the affair; he do'n't understand the sweet sensibilities of life." Helen was sobbing on the bosom of her mother, at the same time that she had determined not to part with her so soon, or so readily as Mrs. Allright imagined.

After a great many remonstrances on both sides, and some speeches bordering rather upon rudeness on the part of

of Miss Ellis, it was agreed that Miss Bellingham was to be permitted to make a visit of a few days to Lady Delmore. Her future residence was to be determined when Dr. Jackson arrived.

Indeed, had it not been decided as it was, Miss Bellingham determined to insist on going with Lady Delmore. Her heart told her that she should rest more secure in the certainty that some one took an interest in her, than in living in a family that she felt no regard for, if she excepted the mistress of it; and this was in some degree lessened by her late union, which she could see in no other light than that of interest.

Lady Delmore was so totally absorbed in agitation and affection for the very lovely object before her, that she hardly knew what she was doing, and apologized in her excessive joy, for the seeming impropriety of her conduct to  
Mrs.

Mrs. Allright, and thanked her for acceding to her, and her dear child's earnest wish (for she said she read it in her eyes) not to separate so soon.

Helen felt herself in an agitation little short of that which had taken such possession of her mother; she did not feel any regret at quitting a house now belonging to Mr. Allright, for one where she was to reside with an affectionate parent.

She was glad to find the subject in dispute likely to be so amicably adjusted, as she would have been sorry to offer any affront to the friend of her first benefactress. Besides her being left joint guardian with Dr. Jackson, and the many obligations she considered herself under for the attention and judicious advice and instruction she had received from Miss Moore, made her wish to settle matters with decorum and propriety, now that this lady had assumed

assumed a new character. Not that Helen, young as she was, could consider any degree of respectability to be annexed to her alteration of name. She sincerely wished that she might find her situation altered for the better; though she had many doubts if it would turn out very favourable.

Lady Delmore, after some time, composed her spirits sufficiently to examine the features of Helen, and declared, that they corresponded exactly with those of her deceased lord; so much so, she declared, that if they had met in a strange place, she should have been struck with the resemblance. No doubt remained that this young lady was her lamented and beloved Julietta, and no one should, with her consent, separate them. Helen was happy to find, at length, that she belonged to some one, and that one a person of consequence; for the idea  
of



of her being (as had been hinted) the child of a favourite servant of Lady Eleanor Levet's, had caused her many a sigh, and a wish to have been somewhat more honourably descended.— Now she could meet her friends with more confidence, supported by honourable connections and relatives.

Miss Ellis pressed their departure, as, she said, she expected friends to call before she could reach Portman Square.

Mrs. Allright perceivig that it was the wish of all that Miss Bellingham should be of the party, consented that she should leave her, till Dr. Jackson's opinion was taken : but would not permit the removal of her servants, &c. till farther deliberation.

Her own servant was permitted to attend her, and the rest to wait on her each morning for orders.

Helen gladly assented to this compromise, to be indulged in the delight  
of

of conforming to the wishes of Lady Delmore.

Soon after the carriage had driven from the door, Mr. Allright arrived, attended by a couple of gentlemen of the law, who totally confounded his Lady with their technical jargon. She only understood that she ought not to have consented to the removal of the young lady.

The Alderman stamped, swore, and scolded himself out of breath, and then sat down in a passion, saying, "Well! so there is not one woman possessed of common sense in the world, I find. Fool that I was to believe prudence belonged to the sex, *old* or *young*; casting a glance at the bride, who sat with all the seeming indifference she could bring her countenance to assume; though she was offended at the insinuation last thrown out. Mr. Allright, by his compliments, and the endearing appellation of his dear Maria, had

had brought his Lady to believe, that she still retained the charms of youth and beauty. Having captivated him, she was led to affect, since her marriage, a more youthful mode of dress and demeanour, than she had ever before attempted. In consequence of her supposed influence, the insinuation of age, which he had thrown at her by an oblique glance of his eye, had taken the deeper effect. She determined not to give him any satisfactory answer whilst the gentlemen of the law remained. And for fear she should be betrayed to shew her temper, she attempted to leave the room.

Mr. Allright requested, in a gentle tone, that she would remain; as he was transported with rage at the ill usage she had met with.

After this *salvo*, he enquired, how long Miss Bellingham was to stay with

this person who made a pretence of being her mother ?

His Lady answered, that she was one of the guardians of the young lady, and accountable to none but Dr. Jackson and her relations, if any were found ; she therefore begged not to be questioned : her word was passed to Miss Bellingham, and so irrecoverable.

The Alderman found that his dear Maria was not, nor would be subject to arbitrary controul, like his children ; and, indeed, he had not found them always in a humour for compliance. He knew, also, that as he was not guardian to Miss Bellingham, though he hoped, when he married, that she would appoint him jointly so with his Lady and Dr. Jackson ; that to teize and trouble her, and make a breach with his Lady, so soon after his union, would not answer any purpose but to  
create

create a laugh at his expence. So, since his wife chose to allow her to please herself, he must do the same, till Dr. Jackson arrived, or his dear Maria allowed of his interference. He therefore took his learned friends into another room, and told them, with a proper compensation for the present trouble, that things must rest as they were till the other guardian came, and when a proper investigation would doubtless reinstate the Heiress in his family, from which he swore, had he been aware, she should never have been suffered to depart.

He had now to reconcile his Lady to the impetuosity and rudeness with which he had addressed her, which was certainly incompatible with that serenity so generally expected during the first commencement of matrimony.

After very violent protestations and professions,

fessions, and some compliments paid to his Lady on the score of both sense and beauty, tranquillity was restored, and the happy pair resigned themselves to that felicity which is the lot of very few.

## CHAP. XX.

MISS Bellingham was soon carried by Lady Delmore to Portman Square, where she was received into a very elegant house, and welcomed to it, as soon as the servants had withdrawn, by her mother. Miss Ellis now came up and embraced her, by the appellation of dear cousin Julietta, saying that she was transported with joy to have so lovely a relative.

Visitors were announced to Miss Ellis; and away she flew to relate all she had witnessed.

Lady Delmore retired for about half an hour with her daughter to her dress-

ing room, and after relating and explaining many things to her entire satisfaction, she advised her to order her servant to attend her, as she might wish to adjust her hair before dinner; and her Ladyship, for her own part, said she would in this time wish to be alone to compose her mind, fatigued, by recent ill health, and the agitation she had on her account undergone.

Helen's mind also needed a little leisure for composure. She did not detain her servant long, but remained alone till Miss Ellis came to attend her to the dinner party, which, contrary to her wishes and expectations, she found very numerous.

Lady Delmore took the hand of Helen, and presented her to each separately, as her long lost daughter.

Most of the company were in some degree related to her Ladyship. Mr. and Mrs. Ellis were brother and sister



to Lady Delmore. To these she was first presented. They received her apparently under a degree of constrained civility.

They did not dissemble so well as their daughter, who declared that she lived but in the smiles of her beloved cousin.

Next to Mrs. Ellis, she was presented to a little smirking man, who made so many grotesque bows, that Helen could hardly keep her countenance.—He was announced as Sir Charles Talbot, a relation of the Delmore family. In short, she was introduced to cousins without number, who all declared themselves most happy in her acquaintance.

Though these assurances might be doubted, yet as they appeared under the guise of sincerity, Helen, whose mind was in unison with all the amiable vir-

tues, knew not to doubt where appearances were so fair.

The day was pent most agreeably to Helen. She felt herself settling into something of a state of security. She had some one to lean on, who could direct her, to whom she was accountable, and in whose advice and affection she could place a reliance. The only disturbance her mind was capable of, was in the faded cheek of Lady Delmore, which bespoke her a prey to ill-health. But her spirits seemed to revive after dinner, and gave Helen a hope that her attentions might restore her mother to that serenity of mind, the want of which, might have affected her nerves.

Nothing was talked of among the party present, but going down to Delmore House, introducing the lovely stranger to the neighbourhood, and of parties.

parties of pleasure that were to occupy their time whilst there.

Miss Ellis contrived, as soon as they removed from the dinner table, to sit next her beloved cousin; and plied her with flattery, so gross, as quite to disgust her new relation on the first day of their meeting. She enquired into all the occurrences of the Brighton trip; also into what company was of the party, in order to find out, if possible, if the heart of Helen was already disposed of.

The simple and artless manner in which she was answered, led her to believe that all was as she wished: for Miss Ellis had a brother, for whom the hand of the Heiress was designed by his family, that is to say, his father and mother. As to Lady Delmore, she was too happy in finding her daughter, to think so soon of disposing of her.

Many days passed in perfect happiness in this family, every branch of which was emulous to shew every mark of attention and respect to their new found relation. She, on her part, returned their attention, with that gratitude, and in that complacent manner, that seemed so justly merited.

Whilst Helen was enjoying the truest happiness in London, her friend Mrs. Dalling was, on the contrary, suffering the most severe distress, in being obliged to remove from Brighton, and leave all the silly, unmeaning flattery, of a string of idle dissipated men, for the society of an amiable and an affectionate husband, and the mansion in which his ancestors had long flourished and been respected.

It was not till some very severe remonstrances had been made on the part of Mr. Dalling, that she could be brought to think seriously of making  
pre-

preparations for her removal to Bentley Abbey, where she was soon to be joined by Sir James and Lady Dalling: a compliment paid to Mrs. Dalling, if she could have been sensible of it, and of which she ought to have been proud, as it was plain that the family were determined to overlook her want of birth and fortune, and to consider her only as the wife of their son, whose happiness was very dear to them. This very circumstance it was, that most disconcerted her; though it was impossible to say so to her husband, as he seemed elated at it, almost in proportion to her depression. However, as she had no alternative, she made herself amends by giving invitations to a number of idle people, who swarm about watering places, for no other purpose than to be taken up by some family for the remainder of the season: for this they run of messages, retail all

the news and scandal of the place, and if, as is very seldom the case, this last should be wanting, they invent something, which they give out in half sentences, with nods and grins, so as to excite curiosity for the present, till something of reality presents itself; and then the last story obliterates all others.

Mrs. Dalling was promised a visit, by so numerous a party, that had they been in earnest, and made good their promise, Bentley Abbey could not have contained them. However, she was very safe, for it is a rule amongst the set she chose to distinguish, to accept all invitations, carefully to mark them down, and, at the breaking up of the season, to examine which promises the most agreeable lounge, and where they shall be most at their ease, with the least expence, and the most advantage.

Dalling

Dalling saw now, when it was too late, that he had been mistaken in his ideas of his wife. He thought that being unused to extravagance and dissipation, she would never enter into any scenes of dissipation, but be a pleasant domestic companion, pleased with those luxuries his fortune could allow, and happy in her home.

She might have been what he wished for a certain time, had he gone down to Bentley Abbey on his marriage ; but the admiration of so crowded and fashionable a place as Brighton, had given her a taste for general admiration, which must be gratified at any expence.

The men laughed at the idea of her going to shut herself without any other company, than that of her husband, in an old gothic mansion; near two hundred miles from the metropolis. They declared it absolutely barbarous to think

think of ; for Mr. Dalling had said in some of their hearing, that he did not intend to have any regular establishment in London ; that he intended only to visit it occasionally, and that not very often.

Mrs. Dalling, however, promised all whom she conversed with, that she would spend the next winter in town, or her husband should have no peace at the Abbey.

She took a melancholy leave of the gay scenes of Brighton, and, with Mr. Dalling, set off for their seat in the North. She remained out of humour all the journey ; so much so, that her husband, on the last day's journey, said, he hoped she would not appear with a frown on her face, when she came a little nearer home ; for he understood his tenants meant to pay him the compliment of escorting them to the

the



the Abbey, and he would wish them to acknowledge her beauty; as he had done.

This was a new scene; so she condescended to rouse herself into something like animation.

At a village, about six miles from the Abbey, they found a most respectable groupe, composed of the tenantry and servants, who were waiting the arrival of their carriage, and on its approach, had filed off on each side of the road to let it pass, and also to have a peep at the 'Squire and young Madam.

They then intended to precede the carriage home.

Mr. Dalling called to the drivers to stop; when he thanked his friends for this mark of their regard. He spoke to and shook hands with most of them, giving a nod and a smile to some of the old grey-headed servants, who kept their station at a humble distance.

As

As soon as this exchange of congratulation and thanks was ended, the carriage passed on; when Mr. Dalling asked his Caroline what she thought of her future friends and tenants?

She replied, rather peevishly, that they appeared a queer set of mortals; and that she was surprized that he condescended to shake them so familiarly by the hand; adding, "if this is the specimen of my country friends, I am sure I shall soon wish myself in town again."

In reply, he wished that she might ever experience equal sincerity in town friends; but of this he said he greatly doubted. However, he begged to assure her, that he was sensible of the worth and value to be set upon these men, with whom she was not yet well enough acquainted, or she would not have despised them. "My mother," said

said he, "would have shaken hands with them, and enquired for all their respective families; and so will you, my dear Caroline, when you are reconciled to a country life."

Nothing could reconcile her to familiarity with such rusticated beings, she replied, they were very well as tenants to cultivate the ground, but no farther could she allow.

Dalling did not wish to dispute with her at such a moment, when the mansion house of his forefathers was just coming to view, and to which she was now, for the first time, approaching.

It was a venerable antique building, partly of a greyish stone; in front, nothing of modern architecture appeared, though it had received many additions, though not of late years, for Lady Dalling had admired the Abbey for its gothic appearance, and counted every modern improvement as a sacrilege:  
what

what little had been done in her time was made to accord as much as possible with the old building.

Mr. Dalling said nothing as they approached the Abbey, knowing it would not, at first sight, suit the taste of his wife; however, though he had the discretion to be silent, she had not, for she exclaimed "Oh, yes, there are the little pigeon-hole windows Lord Charles Wynne described—why I shall never again behold day-light!" Mr. Dalling made no reply. When the carriage stopped, he handed Mrs. Dalling out, and led her into the hall, which was filled with happy and honest faces to welcome them. Mrs. Dalling giving them a smile and thanks, passed on to the parlour, at the door of which stood the butler, and old house-keeper. Mr. Dalling took the old lady's hand, and said, "Come, come, Mrs. Johnson, let me see how you look," and led her

her into the room, where he introduced her to her new lady, who received her very obsequious curtsies with some degree of good humour. Mrs. Johnson prayed that they might be as happy at the Abbey as her good master and mistress, Sir James and my Lady, had been, and that they might have a numerous family, as good as themselves, and as beautiful as her young lady.

Mr. Dalling thanked her very heartily for this last wish and compliment, when she took her leave, in order to send up dinner. Mrs. Dalling asked where they were to dine, when, to her great surprize, a pair of large folding doors opened, and, in a moment, they were amidst the groupe who had attended them to the Abbey, with whom she found herself destined to dine. She received the awkward bows of all the company, and then retired for a few moments to adjust her dress, as she said,

and so

but

but in reality to get quit of such a society, and to sigh in secret for the company she had left at dear Brighton. Mr. Dalling saw her dissatisfaction, and sighed also for a different cause: he feared that he had not made choice of a wife such as he had fondly hoped his Caroline would prove, yet still she might be brought to a domestic state, at least he hoped so, and determined not to see, or if he did, to pass over in silence her disgust at a country life, and by degrees, perhaps, she might be all he wished. He believed that she loved him; and when she found his wishes to centre in the country, her's might rest there likewise. At any rate, he was glad to have escaped from the noise and nonsense of a watering-place. His tenants thronged round him with congratulations, but they begged to be excused from dining at the Abbey, as young madam perhaps was tired, and, they doubted

doubted not, would rather be alone ; but Mr. Dalling soon gave a negative to this request ; “ My friends,” said he, “ we must dine together now, and, I hope, very often afterwards. Would it not be a shame to see you depart without any refreshment after the compliment you have paid us in coming so far ? ” “ Truly it would,” replied a voice that had just opened the door ; when, to the surprize of every one present, Sir James and Lady Dalling entered, accompanied by their daughter-in-law, who had met them in the hall. Nothing could equal the joy the sight of the old folks occasioned among all present ; and they sat down, a happy groupe, to a good dinner, seasoned by good appetites. After partaking of this, and some excellent wine, the tenantry took their leave, when Sir James and his son joined the ladies, who were just returned from making a circuit of  
the

the house, attended by good old Mrs. Johnson, the house-keeper, who had thrown aside four or five years on this joyous day, when she saw her good old Lady attended by the Lady of her sweet young master, whose life, she hoped, would be as happy as that of his parents had been under the same roof. Lady Dalling received these well-meant sayings as they deserved to be, but the young Lady considered them as troublesome, and little short of impertinent. Her Ladyship had descanted pretty fully on the beauties of both the house and furniture, which appeared coeval with the building, and, to Caroline's ideas, truly horrid: however, she was obliged to attend in silence, and what she did not choose to commend, she did not venture entirely to condemn.

A fortnight passed in a domestic circle, during which the family had been visited by all the neighbouring gentry,  
and



and had returned many of their visits. After this Sir James and her Ladyship, now that she had, in some measure, settled the young couple, prepared to return home. Though she did not at all like her son's uniting himself to a girl of no family or fortune, yet now it was past redress, she wished that she might be respected, and in order to this they had determined to give them the meeting at Bentley-Abbey, that their approbation might not remain in doubt.

Never did Mrs. Dalling feel herself more relieved than when the ponderous coach and six drove to the hall door to receive the good old couple on their return home.

Being left alone, Mrs. Dalling had now time to think of her friend Helen, and to wonder why she had not heard from her. The reason was, that the day Frank Allright arrived at Brighton, they had quitted it early in the morning;

ing; so that he had put the letter designed for Mrs. Dalling again into his pocket-book, intending to return it, on his arrival in town, to Miss Bellingham. Caroline wrote to her friend, and intreated, if she did not wish soon to attend her funeral, that she would come to the Abbey, and endeavour, by her presence, to reconcile her to the stupidity of the present scene. She declared herself almost afraid, whenever Dalling was from home, to wander alone over the old gothic mansion. She also touched upon the union which had taken place between their friend and the old banker.

To this letter she received a very friendly answer, in which Helen explained her change of situation, and the reason of her not making the subject known more fully whilst they were together. She begged her excuse for not directly performing her promise; but

but assured her, that nothing could be more to her wishes and inclination than to visit her at the Abbey ; to drive away all folly out of her head ; and to use every endeavour to make her sensible how happy she ought to be in so enviable a state.

Many months, however, elapsed before Helen could join her friend at the Abbey ; during which she had been favoured with such a succession of visitors, that time had not hung heavy on her hands. Mr. Dalling was quite tired of company, in which he had no kind of interest, and which, for ought he knew, would be continued without interval should he remain all the year at home. However, he determined to put an end to this, though the present was not a moment for remonstrances, as his Caroline, he hoped, would soon bring him an heir, and, in the character of an affectionate mother, he hoped

to find a domestic wife. Mrs. Dalling was herself aware of the power her present situation had over the mind of her husband, and therefore teized him with acting over innumerable follies, and exacting from him many sacrifices of his own peace to promote her happiness. She took this opportunity to extort a promise, that she should spend some months in town, after her confinement. She would fain have persuaded him to let her go to town before; but Dalling determined that his child should be born on his own estate, and, by being reared on it, create an interest in those of his own age, and who were to live his tenants as their fathers had also done. "It is by carrying ourselves and our families to London," he would say, "that old attachments drop off, and new ones cannot be formed; indeed they are never desired by the young man, whose chief happiness consists in a race-horse, a tennis-

a tennis-court, and a dice-box, and whose eyes and ears are for ever assailed by innumerable vices, exhibited under the most pleasing and fascinating forms, and where example excites, and deadens every feeling of shame and remorse, which might be the attendants of a naturally good mind the first time it is betrayed into an action that will not bear reflection. There are sufficient companions at hand, to laugh off and ridicule any appearance of compunction, and to banish from the youthful mind every return to propriety and virtue. This once accomplished, the country is looked on as a treasury, on which to draw for the necessary expences; neither the soil, nor those that cultivate it, are thought of otherwise than as instruments that are destined by nature to contribute to pleasures rendered almost tasteless by repetition, though necessary by long habit. The

family mansion goes to decay, a steward lords it over the tenants. If they complain at exactions made by this rapacious man, they are threatened with a visit from the master himself, who will, on his representation, double their grievances. Thus they fear the presence of him who should live in their hearts a common friend. This is the cause of the frequent emigration of our farmers to America, and other parts of the world. They are so squeezed by the rapacity of landlords, that they despair of ever being able to bring up a rising family. It is no wonder that they lose an attachment to that soil, which, after cultivation, will not allow them bread. We have lived at home, Caroline, and, I trust, we shall continue to do so. Never did a man quit our estate for want of proper encouragement."

This natural picture made no other impression on the mind of her to whom  
it

it was addressed, than it would have done had it been laid before one of those thoughtless characters it was intended to describe. She found it impossible to draw her husband to London : so, though unwillingly, she must submit. She wrote to every person that came into her recollection, who, it was possible, might wish to kill time in the country ; amongst whom were the Miss Allrights. She had read of their father's marriage, and believed this could not be agreeable to them, so that a visit to her might be eligible enough, and she was not dissappointed, for she soon received an answer, that they accepted the invitation, and would repair to the Abbey in a very short time.

This raised the spirits of Mrs. Dalling, and depressed those of her husband ; yet he could make no objection to the visit, as Mrs. Dalling had received the hospitality of their house,

in her maiden state. As she could not please herself in removing out of the country, she determined to do so by an attempt at modernizing the old house, by introducing new furniture. She had all the old canopied beds taken down and thrown away as lumber; for a modern upholsterer would not even give them house room.

Mrs. Johnson, who had had a reverence for this old lumber, ever since she was received as assistant to the former Housekeeper, now ventured a request that she might be allowed to take care of the old furniture, which she would be glad to purchase, if allowed to do so.

Mrs. Dalling instantly gave all that she discarded, to this good old woman, who held up her hands in wonder, at the silly thoughtless conduct of her new Lady, which was daily exemplified in different acts of caprice. This to most  
servants,



servants, would have been most agreeable, as something might have been made out of her follies ; but Mrs. Johnson had lived so long in the family, that she could not bear to see it likely to degenerate and loose its ancient dignity ; which she foresaw must be the case, if things went on as they had begun. Besides she thought she saw her good young master did not seem so gay and happy as he used to do in former days.—His brow indicated that he submitted to, rather than tolerated many scenes passing at the Abbey.

Lady Dalling too had conversed with Mrs. Johnson on the imprudence of her son's choice : for her Ladyship was a shrewd observer, and soon saw that she was not the most welcome guest to her daughter-in-law. She staid, however, on her son's account, to establish his family on a proper visiting footing with her ancient neighbours. This

done, she left Mrs. Dalling to herself, not without first advising her to conduct herself steadily, and with more decorum before the servants, who would loose all respect for her, if she was so variable in her orders.

For this advice Caroline was not thankful, nor at all observant. Servants, she thought, were made to bear all tempers, and obey all orders, be they countermanded ever so often.

The servants at the Abbey were not at all of this description. They had been used to steadiness and sobriety; when orders were given, they were never countermanded, without the most obvious reasons.

A very few months changed the face of the family at the Abbey. Not an old servant was remaining, except Mrs. Johnson, who staid at the immediate request of Mr. Dalling, till his wife was well over her confinement. Till this period  
arrived,

arrived, the house was full of company.

The Miss Allrights spent a month at the Abbey, and then went to their sister Clifden in town, not choosing to return to their new mamma, whom they ridiculed without mercy ; nor did they forget to give some very ungracious epithets to their father. They also related, in a very ludicrous way, the story of Helen and her new found mother, to the no small amusement of the company at the Abbey.

Mrs. Dalling did not join in, but she permitted their mirth at the expence of her friend, to whom she was attached, as much as it was possible for a mind like her's to be.

## CHAP. XXI.

THE day Mrs. Dalling left Brighton, was that on which Frank Allright arrived with the news of his father's marriage, which threw all the females of the family into the greatest dismay and anger. They at first affected to disbelieve their brother; but when he assured them he was dispatched to bring them to town to ask a blessing of mamma, and also told them who was the object of their father's choice, they all exclaimed against entering his house any more. Lady Clifden was in a rage. His Lordship whistled an opera tune, wished the young couple  
happy,

happy, and then mounted his horse for his usual ride, and to give the news to all he met. Frank advised them to bear their misfortune with patience, and added an old proverb, "What can't be cured must be endured."—Lady Clifden declared that she would never forgive her father for taking such a starch piece of formality into his family, and without money too. She should not have been surprised if fortune had been the inducement. However, her sisters should not live with such a woman to wait on her, and her young friend, who, no doubt, would share her father's protection equally with themselves. She thought that by making her house a home to her sisters, she might get some cash out of the old man in consequence of the additional expence she must be put to; though this consideration, in fact, made little difference; for the tradesmen

were never paid, so that if any difference there was, it fell on them. The Clifden family existed only on their ingenuity ; so that the acquisition of two more might be turned by them to some advantage ; nay, produce a renewal of credit. Miss Allrights were soon reconciled to the union of their father, since it opened the door of Lord Clifden as a home to them. They never thought how it could be possible to burthen a family already ruined with more incumbrances. Frank represented to his sisters, when alone, that this step would irritate their father, and that they must come home at last ; so that it was best to do so immediately. They would not hear a word, he said on the subject ; he determined, therefore, to discharge all their bills, and having thus set them free to return to town in order to establish himself in the good graces of  
Mrs.

Mrs. Allright, hoping that some day she would mediate betwixt his father and himself, should his circumstances and situation need her interference.

As soon as he reached his father's mansion, and had given an account, which by no means pleased the Alderman, he repaired to St. Mary Axe, and from thence to visit her who had occupied most of his thoughts during his absence. He found Miss Hervey most impatient for his return, as the plain daughters of the good Mrs. Western contrived to make her residence in their family very disagreeable. Yet she thought it would not be proper to attempt a change of residence in the absence of him who had placed her in this family. Besides, the uniform kindness of Mrs. Western, and also that of her son, demanded some explanation from her, to which, unaided by advice, she found herself unequal. The Miss  
Westerns

Westerns had set their face against their mother's admitting a female with no other recommendation than that of a gay young man. Their mother was herself satisfied that Miss Hervey was a woman of honour from the relation given her by Frank Allright, aided by her own modest appearance, and her own account of herself; in addition to this, she felt an interest in a young and beautiful female, with no friend to advise her, and thrown as it were upon a young man for protection. She determined, from the first sight of her, to trust in her artless tale, and offer her an asylum in her family. Knowing her own intentions good, she did not heed the remonstrances of her daughters. They determined from the first, not to be on any good terms with one so much handsomer than themselves. They each of them had frequent opportunities of gratifying their  
spleen



spleen at the expence of Miss Hervey: for the elegance of her figure often drew the question of—"Who Is She?" from their guests. The answers of the Miss Westerns were commonly,—  
"Why, an adventurer from America, whom my mother chuses to patronize. She was introduced to our family by my brother's friend, young Allright." This speech was generally concluded with a shrug of the shoulders or a malicious grin. However, these stories circulated without Miss Hervey's being at all conscious of the light in which she was viewed by the visitors of the family; and whilst these treated her with common civility, she was satisfied. Mrs. Western being always uniformly kind to her, rendered her indifferent about the reserve of her daughters. But when Mr. Allright left town for Brighton, they thought that they might venture a little farther;  
an

an opportunity for doing which occurred in his absence by their brother's proposing to treat them to Vauxhall; provided Miss Hervey could be prevailed on to be of the party. This piqued the young ladies, and they did not fail to accuse him of having lost his heart to one whom no one knew. This conversation was overheard by their lodger. It was the first time she had heard that she was by them looked upon as a suspicious character. She determined to be very circumspect, and that they should have not even the smallest pretext for calumny, as she heard sufficient to prove they were far from being her friends. Soon after they met at the tea-table, and it was proposed to go the next evening to Vauxhall, when Miss Hervey was invited to join the party. This she politely declined, alledging, that she had determined against going at all into public, unless

unless she should be so fortunate as to find any of her own friends, which she feared was impossible, as her aunt's being dead prevented her having any clue whereby she might obtain information. The Miss Westerns, at first, laughed at her resolution, being in hopes that she would, by their brother's entreaties, be prevailed on to change her opinion, and accompany them. On finding her inexorable, they said, if Mr. Allright had made the request, she would not have refused, as they believed she was not in the habit of refusing any of his entreaties. Yet they thought that the society of her own sex might be as proper. Here Mrs. Western interfered, thinking her daughters had gone too far. She desired Miss Hervey might not be pressed to go any where that was not agreeable to herself, giving a look at her daughters, which they did not chuse to understand,

derstand, and the conversation ended in a downright quarrel, in which Miss Westerns told their mother, that if she persisted in retaining a kept mistress in her house, they must quit it.

Circumstances were in this train, when Frank paid his first visit on his return to town. According to the stipulation, when Mrs. Western first received Miss Hervey, that they were not to be alone in her house, the whole family were present during his stay. But Miss H. knowing that she might not have an opportunity of speaking her sentiments, had prepared a letter, which she presented to him, on his quitting the parlour. He saw, by her reserved manner, that something had happened in his absence, of an unpleasant nature, and he hastened into the first coffee house, in his way home, to read the contents of the letter, which were as follows :

“ Sir,

“ Sir,

“ It is with extreme reluctance that I address you on the present subject, when I consider the anxiety and pains you have taken to introduce me into the family where I now reside ; for which let me assure you of my gratitude, before I declare to you that I must not remain here longer. Friendless and unknown, I cannot expect the confidence reposed in others, in a less equivocal situation, but I cannot afford to lose my own good opinion, which I should do, were I tamely to put up with insult, and rest quiet under insinuations, at which my soul revolts ; though I will allow that my situation may, to the malevolent and censorious, afford matter for doubt and animadversion, I did not at first think your kind intentions could be attributed to any other motive than that by which  
you

you yourself are actuated. But I now find myself mistaken; and after expressing my sincere thanks for your kind protection, I must decline your further interference in my behalf: though, be assured, my gratitude will never let me forget what I owe to you.

“ I have been grossly insulted by the Miss Westerns, who have, to my face, given me the name of a *kept mistress*. After this, you will allow that it is proper for me to seek protection amongst my own sex. Indeed, I ought to have considered this in the first instance, but I was too inexperienced to believe any motive, but the true one of benevolence, could be attached to a conduct, praise worthy as it is pure; for which again accept my warmest acknowledgments; we must meet no more. Mrs. Western has kindly undertaken to procure me a situation in the country, with  
some.

some of her own friends. She, good woman, has acted as a mother towards me, and I will be guided by her advice. You will not be displeased at me for this conduct, when you are informed that my character in future will be determined by my present decision.

“ Adieu, then, my best friend, may every earthly happiness await on you! Such is the ardent prayer of a poor Orphan, whose greatest and only solace, in her retirement, will be, that she has acted so as her own heart approves, and as your’s cannot condemn.

“ MARY HERVEY.”

He gave a sigh as he read the last sentence, and then cursed the whole female race indiscriminately. However, he revoked some part, when he considered that his dear Mary had still a sincere

sincere friend in the mother of those ugly fiends who had driven her from the good woman's protection. He could not advise her to a contrary conduct from that which the purity of her own principles dictated; yet he could not help being dissatisfied, that she was going farther from town, where he would be deprived of the happiness of seeing her; and, from the tenor of her letter, he had reason to suppose, that even all correspondence would likewise be prohibited. He determined to wait on Mrs. Western the next day; thank her for her protection of his young friend; find out from her where she was going to remove her, and at the same time give up the bills and cash entrusted, by Miss Hervey, to his keeping. He durst not examine his own heart too minutely; nor would he allow, even to himself, how much this separation would cost him. To prevent it, was impos-



impossible, as he could not declare himself ready to assume the character of a legal protector; and, in the light of a friend, he must admire her conduct, too much to disapprove of it.

After a sleepless night, he arose, determined to go immediately to Mrs. Western's; when he was prevented by his father, who staid in his counting-house till the morning was too far advanced for his visit. He therefore took a solitary dinner at a coffee-house, and afterwards reached the door of the good old lady, which was opened by the servant, who answered to his enquiries, if her Mistress was at home? that she went off at ten that morning, to the country, with Miss.

He then asked if the girl knew to what part of the country they went?—To this she could give no answer.

He scorned to enquire for, or ask any information from the young ladies,  
but

but silently walked away in a state of mind not easily described. He was sometimes inclined to accuse Miss Hervey of ingratitude and unkindness : at others, he applauded the rectitude and propriety of her conduct ; yet he could not see why her future residence was to be a secret. If this was so, he determined to find her out, being conscious that his intentions were perfectly honourable. All his plans and hopes for the future, were overturned for the present ; he was left in a state of uncertainty. Yet that Miss Hervey had acted with great propriety, though she was lost to him for a time, he could not but acknowledge. He believed that she entertained a partiality for him, and trusted that he would not be totally absent from her thoughts. With these hopes he must rest for the present, as it was impossible to believe his father would easily be reconciled, in the present state of things, to their union.

The

The Alderman was not in a humour to be trifled with. The Heiress had left his house, and her fortune was not so secure in the family as he had believed it to be. He accused his dear Maria of something like duplicity, in his own mind, though at present he kept his thoughts to himself, knowing that reproaches would not set things to rights again, and also hoping that Miss Bellingham, not finding her present residence so agreeable as at first she might have imagined, might return to her old friend Mrs. Allright. Patience was necessary. His Lady and her baggage was removed to St. Mary Axe, where an inundation of visitors, poured in every day with congratulations to the happy pair.

Mrs. Allright set about new modelling the house, according to her own fashion. She removed a vast many of

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the shewy gew gaw ornaments, placed there by her daughters-in-law, and replaced them by solid and useful furniture. She had waited many days in the expectation that Miss Allrights would write to her, and inform her when to expect them home.

The Alderman had told her that they were very happy at the change which had taken place, she was therefore surprised they did not think it decorous to write home.

A very few days, however, brought Miss Allright's maid in the Brighton stage, with orders to pack up every thing belonging to herself and her sister, and remove them to Lord Clifden's.

This greatly mortified Mrs. Allright, particularly as not one line accompanied the order for a general remove. The servant arrived in the absence of Mr. Allright, and so glad was she that he was  
from

from home, that she hurried herself in packing up, and placing the boxes, trunks, &c. in a hackney coach, and bid adieu to St. Mary Axe without even a sigh. Mr. Allright, on his return, saw by his dear Maria's face, that she had met with something that had ruffled the serenity of her mind, and, on enquiry, found out the truth. He stormed and swore, without ceasing, at the impudent baggage who had robbed his house. He said he would go to Bow-street, and have her taken up, and that he was sorry that he could not serve those saucy girls in the same manner. However, he had still his revenge against them. After fretting and fidgetting till he was out of breath and tired, he sat down to a good dinner, where he played his part so well, that no one could have guessed that he had met with any thing to discompose him. He uttered heavy execrations against

disobedient children whilst he drank his wine, and did not fail to let Lord Clifden come in for his share of censure. It was those beggars of quality, he said, who encouraged his daughters to treat him and his family with contempt. However, until they came back to their duty and obedience to him, he would never condescend to visit at the west end of the town, that hot-bed of vice and folly. He laid his commands on Frank also, to keep his feet on that side Temple-Bar, if he meant to continue in his family.

Now this was the very thing Frank did not mean: he had intended, the first time he found his father in a tolerable humour, to propose his taking lodgings near home, as Mrs. Allright might wish the house to herself. But the present was not the precise time for such a request; so he was obliged to sit silently, and hear every branch of his family,

family, except those present, undergo every mark of his father's displeasure.

During the conversation, a clerk came in with a draft for two hundred pounds, to discharge the Brighton expences, though Mr. Allright had paid the bill but a short time before he left the ladies. Now came Frank's turn for sharing the general disapprobation: "How durst he draw for such a sum without acquainting him?" He demanded to see the bills, which his son promised to send him the next morning. At the same time he observed, that he had his orders to draw upon the house for payment of bills; and as he was not limited, he did not think any advice necessary.

Here Mrs. Allright interposed in Frank's favour, which he considered as a good omen. She said she perfectly recollected her husband's giving the order for him to draw on the house. So

that the draft was ordered to be honoured, and the Alderman fell asleep, and Frank retired, and, notwithstanding the prohibition, bent his course to the west end of the town, intending to go to the opera, in order to wear off the chagrin he felt at the loss of his dear Miss Hervey, which all his father's sermonizing and scolding had not banished from his mind. He did not believe his sisters were yet arrived in town; but as it was too early for the Haymarket, he went to enquire of their maid when they were expected. His question was resolved as soon as he entered the street; for the door was beset with travelling coaches, curricles, &c. and the pavement crowded with trunks, imperials, and all the usual accommodation of travellers. He did not wait to be announced; for indeed there was no servant unengaged enough to notice him. He entered the dining parlour, where  
the



the family had just sat down to a dinner prepared according to orders sent the day before by Miss Allright's maid.

On his entrance, every voice exclaimed "Ah! Frank, how are ye? Have you brought mamma's blessing?" asked Lady Clifden. "No," replied he, "I have brought papa's curses, though, which he has been denouncing ever since he sat down to dinner, till he fell asleep. They may be renewed, for aught I know, over the tea-table."

"Thank Heaven!" said Miss Allright, "that we are out of the reach of them. Does'nt he frighten his bride with such boisterous fits? When does she come out?"

"When does she figure away in public?" asked his Lordship; "I shall pay her a morning visit to-morrow, I believe, if my horses can be prevailed on to shape their course towards the vile city. But if the old one assails me with

any of his flights of fancy, I shall be off. No philippics for me."

"I dare say Frank will be a great fortune, if he pleases mamma, and hands about the cake and wine prettily," said Marian.

"I long to see you exhibit, and shall not fail to call soon," said her Ladyship.

Here Frank interrupted the volubility of tongues that was levelled at him, and declared, that if his sisters were to shew a little more respect to mamma, it might be better for them in the end; that, for his part, had it been in his power to prevent their father's making a fool of himself in his old age, he certainly would have done so; but as the union was not to be undone, why it was best to submit quietly. That they might thank Providence that he had not taken some blooming servant girl,  
who

who might have provided a set of young boys and girls for them to nurse.

This last supposition set the whole table in a roar. His Lordship declared he was ready to take care of all Mrs. Allright's children, and that they should be nursed at his expence.

The ladies went to dress for the opera, and his Lordship and Frank were left alone, when they attacked the claret in great good humour. They talked over all the Brighton news. His Lordship informed Frank that Miss Albina Delany was, on the next week, to become Mrs. James Elderton; cautioning him, at the same time, not to take the matter to heart. On the departure of Miss Bellingham, poor James was so roasted and teized for letting the heiress slip through his fingers, after the clothes were bought for the wedding, and the writings on the point of being drawn, as his foolish mother had reported, that

he determined not to leave the place without a wife. And as Albina was at hand, and he thought her, he declared, a nice dashing girl, why it might be as well to make up matters with her. The old people consulted with each other, and all was concluded except the ceremony when they came away. This accounted for Billy's being from town. He left it the very day Frank returned, but they missed each other by taking different roads. They amused themselves with their friends and their foibles until his Lordship thought it time to dress, when Frank took his leave, promising to look in upon them at the opera, if he did not find himself better disposed of.

When he reached the Haymarket, he took his station in the pit, in order to have a complete survey of the boxes, and that the boxes should have as complete a survey of him also. The performance

formance was begun, but as the boxes were yet nearly empty, he chose a seat near a very pretty girl, who was accompanied by a woman of a genteel appearance, though somewhat advanced in life. He observed, that they, as well as himself, were on the look-out for some one expected. He tried to engage them in conversation, but they declined his advances. After waiting nearly half an hour, the young girl exclaimed "There he is, I see him!" Upon which Frank, turning round, perceived that his sister's box was just occupied by herself, Marian, and Sophia, and that they were accompanied by Lord Clifden. He turned his eyes from them in quest of the person whom the ladies next him were interested in. He could not see any gentleman on that side of the house but his brother-in-law, and he did not know how to account for the extreme agitation of the young lady at his appearance.

F 6

pearance. After a little time, he asked the eldest of the females, if she knew the party that occupied the box directly behind them? She replied that she did not. He then asked if she knew who those were in the next box? "Oh yes!" she replied, "that's Lord and Lady Clifden; they are just come from Brighton; we left them there last Monday. I hardly thought they would have been here to-night; but I know his Lordship is very fond of the opera."

By this conversation, and the lady's knowing Lord Clifden's propensity to music, he concluded that they were on a more familiar footing with his Lordship than was strictly compatible with his present engagements, and he felt a degree of resentment arising in his breast at the treatment his sister was likely to receive from her Lord, when he began thus early to form other attachments. He determined to go up  
stairs,

stairs, and join the party, being but little satisfied with his present associates, now he knew that they were women of a description he would not choose to be seen with in public.

He moralized all the way up stairs, and exclaimed against the vices of his own sex, who were never more happy than when they were destroying the purity and innocence of the female character:—Poor Louisa sits there, happy as she believes herself, in the affection of that brute, who, perhaps, is admiring her rival now in her sight, though she is unconscious that such a creature exists. The box door was opened. The whole party were in a violent fit of laughter when he entered, and, at the same time Lord Clifden made his retreat, leaving Sir Charles Hanmer with the ladies. Frank expressed his happiness at seeing them so merry after the fatigue of their journey.

Lady

Lady Clifden said, "Indeed I am a little fatigued; but we have been roasting my Lord, who is gone to his *Chere Amie* in the pit. Sir Charles was so good as to drive her up in his curricule. I saw you, sly fellow, you drove into an inn yard at Westminster-bridge. Sophia says she is sure it was you." Frank stood in utter astonishment that his sister spoke of these occurrences as she would have done of the best joke imaginable, and held up his hands in token of surprize. Sir Charles told Lady Clifden, that she grew scurrilous, and that he would take example, and leave her as Clifden had done. Then taking Frank by the arm, though he had never seen him before, he said, "Let's go to the gallery for fun." As soon as the box door was shut, he said, "I want you to support me; for it is true I drove the divine Fanny to town to oblige



## WHO IS SHE?

oblige Clifden. There is a lady in the gallery who will be in heroics the instant she sees me. Now I want you to swear you came from Brighton in my curricule. Lady Clifden only guesses what she accuses me of, or she would be devilish jealous. "Jealous!" echoed Frank, "why she can't be jealous of both Clifden and you too?" "Can't she indeed! but I believe you are right; for she only puts on the pouts with her husband, because it is right she should do so, but egad she would be in earnest with me, if she was assured that it was true what that vulgar sister of her's asserts."

After this short view of things, Frank found that there was little to pity on either side. He was now inclined to be merry at the embarrassment Sir Charles would experience when he found that he was the brother of Lady Clifden.

He

He went with Sir Charles to the gallery, where they found the female he had expected ; but she would not deign to look at him for some time, till passion got the better of her, and she gave him a violent slap on the face, bidding him carry that to his girl he had brought to town with him.

He looked very foolish, wished her a pleasant evening, and ran off, leaving Frank by her side, who, not being disposed to swear whatever his friend pleased, endeavoured to reconcile her to the infidelity of her lover, hoping that she would not be inexorable, but receive the penitent again into favour, as the Lady who came up with him, was in the pit, and he had never been near her, but had come up to the gallery, to look for her the moment he came into the house.

She

She had heard that Sir Charles brought up some one, but hardly believed it, and was only trying to come at the truth; but now when Frank avowed that he brought up a female, and that she was indeed in the pit, her face was lighted into a flame, and she instantly darted from his side, without saying a word. She ran down stairs, and was at the pit door in an instant.

Frank pursued her, determining to view at a distance, the bustle he had occasioned; hoping, in his turn, to furnish another fund of amusement for the Ladies in the boxes. He saw both Sir Charles and Lord Clifden sitting on each side the young girl he had the first conversation with; though they sat in view of his own box, which contained his wife and her sisters.

The Lady approached them, a row being left empty just behind. As soon

as

as she came within reach of Sir Charles, she snatched his hat, which he held carelessly under his arm, and whisked it over the heads of those before him, 'till it alighted on the stage, at the foot of Madame Bolla, who was warbling one of her divine airs. This set the house in a violent roar, and Sir Charles again retreated amidst the shouts of his friends. He was followed by the Lady, who, no doubt, pursued him home to fight it out.

Frank now determined to go and let his sister have her share in the mortification, by telling her the story, and convincing her, beyond a doubt, that Sir Charles had his other attachments as well as her Lord. He was sorry that his sisters were witnesses of such profligacy of conduct, and determined to endeavour at persuading them quietly to take up their residence in St. Mary Axe.

**Axe.** He determined not to let his father into the secret, knowing, that if he did, he should also be a sharer in the displeasure the unwelcome intelligence would occasion.

## CHAP. XXII.

MISS Bellingham had now spent some time with Lady Delmore, yet nothing had transpired that either confirmed or discountenanced that lady's claim to her relationship. Her Ladyship treated her with great tenderness and affection, being herself quite convinced that she had found her long lost daughter. Each day exhibited Helen in a new and more interesting point of view; she was surrounded by admirers, and solicited by Lady Delmore, to name one to whom she gave a preference.

Helen declined this, as she really felt them equally alike insipid and uninteresting.

resting. There was one man who occupied a corner of her heart, though she would hardly allow this, even when she questioned herself on self examination, yet the name of Gower always occurred to her memory, whenever she was spoken to by Lady Delmore on that subject. She even blushed to acknowledge to herself a partiality for a transient acquaintance, of whom she knew no more than that he had rendered himself agreeable to her, by some few attentions, and by an expression of sentiments of benevolence and goodness of heart, very unusual in the circle in which she mixed ; who effected an unfeeling indifference, even to their own concerns. He being an officer in the navy, she did not doubt, but he was employed in the service of his country, and thought no more of her. She durst not trust herself to mention his name to  
any

any one, for fear they might observe her at all interested in her enquiries.

As Lady Delmore could not get Miss Bellingham to acknowledge a partiality towards any of her numerous suitors, she begged leave to direct her attention towards Sir Harry Cleaveland, a distant relation of her deceased father's. She enumerated the many accomplishments of Sir Harry, and also mentioned his large estate ; assuring Helen she was very fortunate in having been marked out by his friends for the wife of so elegant a man. Her Ladyship said, that she would leave her to think of the proposal which had been only that morning made to herself by a near relative of Sir Harry's.— She then took her leave, after saying, that Miss Bellingham would meet the enamoured swain on the next evening at his sister's, Lady Bell Dawson's rout.

At



At the appointed time, Lady Delmore, attended by Miss Bellingham, (for her Ladyship could not prevail on that young lady to discontinue this name till the period of Lady Levet's will being opened) went to Cumberland street, where they found a very large assemblage of the fashionable world.

As soon as their names were announced, the Lady of the mansion came and welcomed them, saying that she had expected them every minute for the last half hour, and that poor Sir Harry had been so often disappointed, that, she believed, he had really gone in quest of them. After talking herself out of breath, in violent and exaggerated encomiums on the beauty of Helen, she left them to attend to some other of her guests, who had not yet had their dose of flattery.

Lady

Lady Bell was of that description of females, who, having at last outlived all chance of meeting with a mate herself, did her best towards making matches for all her acquaintances. She kept a regular register of people's names, who were on the look out for either wives or husbands. No young woman or man came out, but she looked over her memorandum book, to search out a suitable match for them. If she was acquainted with the parties or their friends, she endeavoured to bring them to notice each other; and having very often been successful in her negotiations, why both young and old tried to stand well in her Ladyship's opinion.

As soon as she heard of Lady Delmore's daughter being found, and that she was the heiress, about whom so much had been said, she immediately fixed upon her as a fit wife for her  
own

own brother, Sir Harry ; who was really too lazy and indifferent to look out for himself.

She had lost no time in waiting on Lady Delmore with the news, how much her dear Harry was enamoured with her lovely daughter ; and entreating, in his name, to be admitted a candidate for her heart ; though at the time Lady Bell took this liberty with her brother, he was at Newmarket, and did not know a word of the subject of Lady Delmore's new found daughter, or had he ever seen Miss Bellingham. However, on his return to town, when Lady Bell had related the connection, fortune and beauty of the lady she had solicited, he thanked her, and bid her, as she had began, to settle all the other preliminary articles, and he would, if possible, flatter Miss into consent, provided she was as rich as his sister represented, and did not expect too much attention.

He, as well as his sister, believed that a handsome person, with a title annexed, would render a refusal amongst the chapter of impossibles. It was true that he had been in waiting till his patience was exhausted, and he had retired to a parlour, where he had carelessly thrown himself upon a sofa, and instead of having gone in quest of them, was, at the time of Lady Delmore's arrival, actually fast asleep. Indeed they would in all probability have missed each other, as he had never seen any of the party in his life. This kept his sister on the watch, to introduce the ladies, and to give him his cue.

Nearly an hour had elapsed before Sir Harry awoke from his slumber, nor would he have done so then, but for the tongues of some chattering women, who came into the room to leave their cloaks, which they carelessly threw upon the heap, that nearly smothered the  
brother

brother of their hostess. The room being dark, the servants had, as the ladies cast them off, thrown cloak upon cloak, and shawl upon shawl, so that when the Baronet began to move, he was like a snail with a house on his back. He disrobed himself, and calling for a light, endeavoured to arrange his dress, so that he might not be found out to have been sleeping.

Having made his way up stairs, he made his bows with much grace, stared Helen nearly out of countenance ; and then passed on to utter some of his unmeaning jargon to the rest of the ladies who would attend to him, and to ask their opinion, and that of the men also, concerning the intended Lady Cleveland.

Not a doubt remained, but that if he could bring himself to propose, he should be received, and carry off the prize ;

which ought not in reality to have been a matter of so much indifference as he made it ; as his own estate had been at nurse for some time past, and he needed a fortune as large as Miss Bellingham's to go on in his usual career ; but he, from not looking into his own affairs, believed himself not so much out at elbows as to render him very anxious on this subject, believing, that he had but to make an offer in order to be received by any one.

However, as this match seemed lest likely to give him trouble, why he might get through the ceremony of a very short courtship, and all the necessary formalities of presentations and galas on the happy occasion ; after which, of course his Lady would take care of herself, as he intended to do of himself. With these ideas, he first met the woman whom he believed to be,

through his sister's interference, destined for his partner for life.

Miss Bellingham could not but observe this gentleman more particularly than any other, on account of the intimation given her by Lady Delmore, that he had requested leave to pay his addresses to her, and found herself extremely agitated on seeing that every one to whom he addressed himself directly turned their eyes upon her. What he could be saying, it was impossible for her to guess; but that she was the subject, added greatly to her embarrassment.

This evening was destined to be particularly unpropitious to Helen, for she was called from chatting with Lady Clifden, by Lady Delmore, who said she wanted to introduce her to a most amiable young man, a relation of the family, who did not know that she was in town, having only arrived the even-

ing before. Her Ladyship then led her to an anti-room, where to her great astonishment, Captain Gower was presented to her. They both stood in equal astonishment. Mr. Gower had heard of Lady Delmore's having recovered a daughter she had long been in search of; but as he always considered her Ladyship as a character not of the first order, and that she had always treated him with an hauteur and distance not the most pleasing, why he was not anxious to make the enquiries he otherwise might have made. To his great surprize, when she met him this evening, she laid aside much of her usual stiffness, and welcomed him to town in a most friendly manner; asking him if he had seen her beloved Julietta. To this question he gave a negative, declaring, at the same time, that he should feel himself honoured by her introduction to the young Lady. She flew away



in great spirits, saying, "stay where you are, Philip, a few moments, I will bring the dear girl to you;" and then ran away to find her.

Nothing could equal the astonishment of both at this presentation, but that of Mr. Gower, was the greatest. How could Miss Bellingham, heiress to Lady Eleanor Levet, be Lord Delmore's daughter? And, if she really was so, every fond hope which he had cherished was blasted for ever, as he himself was a natural son of that nobleman's. He paid his respects to Helen so awkwardly, and with so much embarrassment, that Lady Delmore soon discovered that they had been known to each other before. She said, "I find you are not strangers. I am glad of this, as you will be acquainted at once, and I shall see you, Philip, oftner in Portman Square." He made his bow of acknowledgment for her invitation, and

as soon as he could, after promising to make them an early visit, passed into the great drawing-room, in order to solicit an explanation from the Lady from the house, who, he knew, must be in possession of all the story. Lady Bell Dawson soon gave him all the intelligence of which she was mistress, adding, “ your beautiful sister is soon to become Lady Cleaveland, I hope.”

As soon as he quitted her Ladyship, he determined to return home, not being in a tone of mind for all the unmeaning frivolities of a route. However, he was arrested on the stair case by the man of all others he wished to have avoided. This was Sir Harry Cleaveland himself, who seizing him by the arm, insisted on his returning again into the anti-room, with him. “ We are going,” said he, “ to be related ; so you must not refuse me your company this evening. I desire you will stay, and  
take

take a *petit souper*. After the bustle is over, we will talk matters over." He then ran on with a vast deal of his violent love for Miss Bellingham; made many enquiries which Mr. Gower could not answer, and, after insisting that he should not go from the house till after supper, left him, to pursue some one else. Mr. Gower took this opportunity to slip away, leaving his apologies at the door.

When the ladies returned to Portman Square, Lady Delmore asked, and was informed by Helen, when and where she had met Mr. Gower. "I dare say, my dear, you are acquainted with the circumstance that occasions our familiarity towards each other." Helen said, no, she was not, as her acquaintance was but slight, and she had never been informed as to that gentleman's connections. "Well then you will be surprised to find that he is your brother. That

is, if you will allow him that title, for he is a son of Lord Delmore's, born just before our union." Miss Bellingham, on this information, not only felt surprise, but a sentiment that acted more strongly upon her feelings. Her agitation was so visible, that Lady Delmore said, " My dear, I see that you are unwell, from fatigue, and the heat of the rooms. I was to blame to keep you up. I will now wish you a good night, but not till I assure you that Gower is an excellent young man, and stands very high in the opinion of his superiors, in his own profession. So that you need not blush to own him, though he is a natural son."

Both Gower and Helen passed a sleepless night. The former before morning had almost reasoned himself into a resignation to that fate, which though he was not allowed to form the tender tie he wished, yet had left him  
the

the supreme happiness of being near, and perhaps dear to her who engrossed his every thought, since they first met at Brighton. Had the present circumstance not happened, why it was very probable that a union between them could never have taken place, on account of the difference in point of fortune; as he could never, he was certain, have had the presumption to solicit her hand, whilst it was out of his power to mention his being in possession of a fortune that could entitle his making the proposal. He then determined to rest happy in the name of brother, and was glad that this title would give him an opportunity to interfere for her whom he must ever love. If he found it impossible to stifle this passion, yet he determined to correct it, so as to be unobserved.

When he arose, he dressed, in order to make a visit in Portman Square, as in

his present disposition, he wished the first meeting over, when he hoped to be by Helen acknowledged in the relation in which he stood towards her. He gave many sighs when he reflected that their consanguinity could not be established on a another footing.

After this visit, Mr. Gower was received by Helen as a brother in whom she felt the warmest interest. He attended her every where, and almost lived in the family.

When Lady Delmore went to the country, Mr. Gower received an invitation to spend the summer with them, should the duties of his profession allow of it. This being the case, he very joyfully accepted the offer.

In the mean time, the situation of Miss Bellingham was very perplexing ; for, on Dr. Jackson's arrival in town, which took place not so soon as he wished, though as soon as his parochial  
duties

duties would allow ; he held a consultation with Mr. and Mrs. Allright, as to their ward's present situation. It was very complex and perplexing, being a wheel within a wheel. They had no actual right to control the young Lady, as to her place of residence, particularly as Mrs. Allright had passed into another family. Lady Levet, in her will, had only expressed a desire, that if it was found possible, Miss Moore would continue to live with Miss Bellingham till she was of age. She had not made it an absolute condition. She had not laid Miss Bellingham under any restraint on any subject, except that of her intended marriage, should she so determine before she was of age. Dr. Jackson therefore did not know how they could interfere, otherwise than by advice. Mr. Allright was for threats and compulsion—"It was all nonsense. Lady Delmore was a cunning jade, and only wanted to go snacking in a good for-

fortune." At length it was proposed, that Miss Bellingham should be requested to meet Dr. Jackson any day she was at leisure, to dine with him, and to settle some things that were indispensably necessary at that time. Dr. Jackson waited on Miss Bellingham himself, and made the request of her spending a day with him at Mr. Allright's. She was truly glad to see the good man, and named the day after that on which they met. When he took his leave, happy that Lady Delmore was from home, he left compliments for her Ladyship, with intimation that he would make her a visit before he left town.

Miss Bellingham knew that this visit would be to her a most unpleasant one ; but it could not be avoided. She determined to resist any overtures from Mrs. Allright to return to her family again ; but came to this resolution, that  
if



if she were not allowed to remain with Lady Delmore till the allotted time, when all mystery she hoped would have an end, and which could only be the delay of a few months, to take refuge in the family of her friend Caroline; well knowing that Mr. Dalling would kindly receive her. With this resolution she went to St. Mary Axe, where Mrs. Allright received her most kindly; for she had continued to make her constant visits ever since she had removed to Portman Square.

Dr. Jackson talked dispassionately over the situation in which their young ward stood, and advised her to return to Carleton, and there stay, till she could herself determine what was best; offering to procure a respectable female to remain with her. She could there receive the visits of all her friends, and, when enabled, attach herself to those  
who

who would be found to have the best right to her obedience.

To this advice Helen would most likely have adhered, had not a circumstance happened that made the house of Lady Delmore the most agreeable to her own wishes, though she dared not to own it even to herself. This was no other than that of enjoying the society of her new-found brother, who had only the day before promised to spend as much of the summer with Lady Delmore as was possible.

Mr. Allright urged the propriety of her remaining in his family, as Lady Levet had requested Miss Moore, on her death-bed, never to leave sight of her until she became her own mistress. In short, all arguments were used to induce her to return to St. Mary Axe, but without any effect. She asserted that she believed herself to be undoubtedly the daughter of Lord Delmore.

If

If so, no one was so proper for her to reside with as her mother: but if they objected to this, then she would either go to Carleton, or to Bentley-Abbey, until acquainted with her real situation.

Since she would not return to Mrs. Allright's protection, when at Carleton, the Alderman thought, he should be nearer her, and Frank might have an opportunity of gaining her heart during the summer months they passed there. She therefore joined Dr. Jackson in recommending Carleton as her best place of residence. He agreed to consult Lady Delmore, and then to report, on the next day, what they had determined. She left them with a mind greatly perplexed how she should act so as to please all parties, and, at the same time, approve herself.

Lady Delmore was in a violent passion at their daring to interfere between her darling child and herself, and almost

most insisted on her writing that evening, to say that she should remain with her mother, until a prior right should be proved to belong to any other person; and to add, that she was daily in hopes to find the poor woman who was entrusted with the care of her from her birth. She had heard some intelligence of her lately that might lead to her, and end all doubt.

In the morning when Miss Bellingham came to breakfast, she found a letter from Mrs. Dalling, and another from her husband. That from Caroline was to inform her that she was in a state of rapid recovery from confinement, and that she had a lovely boy (as the gossips had declared) to present to her, and now longed for her promised visit; for that Bentley-Abbey was quite a desert, all her visitants being frightened away by the approach of her *accouchement*. The duke of Denbigh had

had promised to give her the meeting if she would come, and such a promise to some females would be considered as a compliment ; but she knew her friend to be sentimentally inclined, and as she had heard that the sentimental Mr. Gower was in town, she almost despaired of the Duke's being able to attract her to the country. She informed her how she had spent her time while the Allrights were at the Abbey ; and concluded with rejoicing that at length she was released, and could again enjoy the society of her friends.

Miss Bellingham saw the same thoughtless girl in her friend Caroline that she had ever been, though she had indulged a hope that her levity would be laid aside when she assumed the maternal character. She laid her letter aside to peruse that of her husband's, which bore a very different complexion. He wrote an invitation in the most pressing and kind strain for

Helen

Helen to come to the Abbey, saying, that his beloved Caroline had made him one of the happiest beings on earth by giving him a boy, who promised to be as beautiful as herself; that he hoped she would now give her time to him and his child, and not think so much of contributing to the happiness of others, as to neglect those who really valued her society. He complimented Miss Bellingham, by saying he was sensible how far her example and advice would go with her friend, and that he therefore hoped, before his house was again crowded with visitants, she would give them her company, of the value of which none was more sensible than himself.

Though Mr. Dalling expressed that he was the happiest man breathing, she doubted it, as the concluding part of his letter plainly indicated that his wife and he were not at all accordant in their  
ideas

ideas of happiness: she loved company to a fault, and he, on the other hand, was fond of domestic retirement. Besides, the Miss Allrights had retailed some scandalous anecdotes, which led Miss Bellingham to think that though they, she hoped, were exaggerated, yet some foundation must be given for what they gave out. She trembled for her beloved friend Caroline, and therefore determined to make her a visit, and judge for herself. If she found her acting in such a manner that she should be led to condemn it, to remonstrate with her, when she flattered herself that the weight of her advice might restrain her from going all the lengths for which the Clifdens and the Allrights had given her credit.

For the purpose of gaining Lady Delmore's consent, she stated that her only motive for wishing to make this visit was to get rid of the importunities  
of

of her guardians for her direct removal to Carleton, and she promised to return as soon as it should be intimated that her Ladyship was arrived at Delmore-Hall. Indeed this was her intention. However, Lady Delmore insisted on her remaining in town a few weeks longer, as Sir Henry Cleaveland had received her permission to visit Miss Bellingham at her house, in the character of a suitor. She, at the same time, hinted her wish that she should lay aside the assumed name, and take that of Delmore, as Sir Harry could not take her hand under a false name. Helen ventured to hint that she did not believe that Sir Harry would be troubled on that account; but that since she had been called Bellingham so long, she would still bear the name, until she saw just and positive reasons why it should be abandoned. Sir Harry paid many visits to Miss Delmore, as he  
always



always called her, not choosing to address her in her doubtful title, which he laughed at and ridiculed in her presence. He also spoke very disrespectfully of Lady Eleanor Levet, which was resented by this young lady as a direct intention to affront herself. He excused himself by observing that as it was determined that they were to be man and wife, they ought not to quarrel beforehand, and that the sooner the affair was concluded the better for both parties. Helen did not consider that any one had a right, in the present posture of things to dispose of her without her own consent. She thanked him for the preference he had shewn her; but she was determined never to marry any one for whom she had not a high esteem. This speaking ill of her whom she must respect, was a proof that he was not worthy to inherit the splendid fortune which, by that Lady's goodness, she

she was to inherit. With this she left him, which he was very glad of, as he found he had gone rather too far, and not choosing to be at the trouble to bring things about again himself, he trusted in his sister, Lady Bell Dawson, to do away this offence, and to court the Lady and her relations for him, thinking he did her honor sufficient in allowing her to bear his name and title, as an equivalent for her fortune.

This insolence in Sir Harry hastened Miss Bellingham's determination to leave town, fearing lest Lady Delmore should still persist in her receiving his visits; for besides what he had said to herself, Mr. Gower had told her that Sir Harry made so certain of obtaining her hand, that he talked of his marriage in every company as a matter concluded.

Mr. Gower and Sir Henry Cleaveland were men of such opposite characters,

racters, that it was no wonder if the former gentleman was hurt to find Miss Bellingham could entertain any thoughts of giving herself to the latter. Though he must for ever give up the fond hope of gaining her affections on the footing of love himself, yet, in the relation in which he then stood, he considered it a duty to tell her the precise character of the man whom he believed she favoured as a lover, and who was to become her partner for life. If, after this, she still persevered, he had done what he thought right, and could only lament that she had made so imprudent a choice. However, upon an explanation, he found not only that he was not her choice, but that, of all men, he was her aversion. She consulted with Mr. Gower, and told him what plan she had formed for absenting herself from his presence; which he not only approved, but applauded. This was

sufficient for her immediate determination, since her dear brother, as she now called Mr. Gower, was satisfied she acted right. All other opinions were of no avail, and, the next week, after informing Doctor Jackson and Mrs. Allright of her design, she set out for Bentley Abbey, accompanied by Miss Ellis and Mr. Gower, who were to return to town, after having left Miss Bellingham with her friends.

Miss Ellis was much delighted to part with Miss Bellingham, and also to have an opportunity of being alone with Mr. Gower, at whom she had been setting her cap, for the last two or three years, knowing that Lord Delmore had left him a very large fortune, in case his daughter could not be found ; and in case she should be restored, still a very handsome one. Besides, he was much esteemed in his profession, and tolerably high for his standing in the service.

service. He had signalized himself more than once, and bid fair to attain to the highest honours. But alas ! Miss Ellis was Mr. Gower's aversion ; for he knew her to be both artful and insincere, two qualities totally opposite to his own nature. She, during their journey back to town, lamented the folly of Lady Delmore in being so positive as to Helen's being the child which she had lost ; and hinted that Mr. Gower ought to take up the matter, as he would be a great loser by the young lady's being acknowledged. He cut her very short by telling her, that he was too happy in having such a sister to give up the title for any paltry advantage that he might derive in a pecuniary way from so unworthy a conduct.

## CHAP. XXIII.

THE Miss Allrights, after having spent a few months with their sister Clifden, and in that period having been treated by her and her Lord in the style of dependants, when they found that nothing was to be drawn from the Alderman for their maintenance, now began to think of returning, if they would be received, to St. Mary Axe.— They had tried all their arts to inveigle some one to offer them protection; but they had been inmates of a house famed for nothing so much as dissipation and extravagance. Therefore, the men  
who

who thought at all, (which were by far the least numerous in their society) and those who were thoughtless, equally avoided any serious connection. It was said that they had had offers, but not of the kind that was binding for life. If it was so, they prudently kept these to themselves. They made two or three attempts at visiting Mrs. All-right, before they were received ; but as all cash resources rested at home, there they must rest also. A penitentiary letter to papa, at length allowed their trunks a place in the despised house, and Lady Clifden was quit of spies and incumbrances which she could not turn to any account.

Lord Clifden being seldom at home, they were no trouble to him ; but they served him as a subject of reproach to her Ladyship for taking them in, whenever she spoke of pecuniary embarrassments.

Frank had found out the place of residence of his dear Miss Hervey, from Mrs. Western on her return to town, when she brought him a letter from the young lady herself, to let him know how very happily she was situated in the family of Mrs. Arden, Mrs Western's sister, who was a clergyman's widow. She begged that he would again accept her thanks, and excuse her if she did not continue her correspondence; as he must know this to be improper; though, should any event of moment occur, she should break through her silence to communicate it to him.

Satisfied that she had gained a proper protection, he endeavoured to bear the loss of present society, in hopes that a time might arrive, when he might, without restraint, indulge the hope of her being his particularly, now that all the hopes of his marrying Miss Bellingham were fast declining in the opinion of  
the



the Alderman himself. He observed too, that his *dear Maria* had given way to the appellation of *Mrs. Allright*; and that he had ceased to dress as usual at the commencement of their union, and had taken to his snuff and his afternoon's nap. All these things indicated that Mrs. Allright's influence, if ever she had any, was on the decline, he therefore placed some dependence on futurity, the bank on which most people draw largely, for the accomplishment of many plans now formed.

In the interval, he amused himself as usual with his friends, and amongst others, Mr. and Mrs. James Elderton, who had returned to town with their brother, Billy Delany, as gay as ever. He had brought also the red book, and Frank had recourse to him still for supplies, when every thing else failed. He attended all the entertainments and galas given in honour of the wedding;

and promised for his sisters that they should attend a most superb fête, which was to be given at their villa, at Stoke Newington, which Mrs. Elderton said was to be in style, and such as they had attended at the Countess of Meldrum's, at the west end of the town.

It was a subject of great regret to Billy, that Miss Bellingham had left town before their grand doings, as he called them; for she herself might have danced with and taken a liking to him, had she witnessed, that they in the city, could manage these affairs as tastily as themselves.

Frank could not understand what was to be the nature of the entertainment to be given; but it appeared by nods, shrugs, and hints, that it was to outdo all the usual things of this kind. Three weeks were necessary for the preparations, and, during this time, he received a direct prohibition not to approach

proach the villa on pain of not being admitted to *The Fête*. This only served to whet his curiosity. He tried to coax Billy to take him out when the Ladies were in town; but all would not do. He said the doors were locked in their absence.

Both the Mistress Eldertons, mother and daughter, had been seen, at different times, rather shabbily dressed, passing through the city, in their way back to Stoke Newington, at as early an hour as seven o'clock. This had been observed to Frank Allright, by more than one person, with enquiries, if any accident had happened to any of the family. As his curiosity, respecting what they were about, had been already set afloat, he determined, when he should be inclined to rise early, to bend his course in that direction, that he must meet them on their return home.

One morning he observed the coach approaching, and, when within a convenient distance, he put up his finger for the coachman to say nothing, as the windows were drawn up like an empty carriage. He got up behind, and so travelled to the villa. When they stopped, he got down, took off his hat, and opened the door. At first view, he saw nothing but pile upon pile of baskets, of all sorts and sizes.

At length, the younger Mrs. Elderton peeped her head out, saying, "Oh, mamma, I've been so mobbed." Seeing a gentleman instead of mamma, as she expected, she instantly drew back her head.

Frank said, "Come, then, and let me hear your adventures, why did you not call on me? I would have protected you. Why did Elderton let you go alone?"

"What

“What a provoking creature you are! you can’t let us alone only ’till to-morrow night.”

“Let you alone,” answered he, “no to be sure, when I saw you in such danger.”

“Why, surely, dearee me!!! you did not go to Common Garden, did ye?”

Frank then began to have a shrewd guess what they had been at, believing that, like Mr. Gilpin, “Though on pleasure she was bent, she had a careful mind.”

The Lady, after the removal of many packages, descended from the carriage, and they proceeded, not to the breakfasting, but to the Housekeeper’s room, a small pantry so distinguished, where they found mamma and Mr. James, employed in buttering hot rolls, which Frank began to devour unmercifully, laughing at the odd figure the younger

Mrs. Elderton made, now he came to examine her dress. She had got on a great blue joseph that once belonged to her husband's grandmother, together with the Housekeeper's bonnet; which did not bear any *resemblance* to that of any modern cook's. Round her fair neck was tied a red silk check handkerchief, which at other times, served to adorn the neck of her husband, when he took the diversion of hunting.

"Come, sit down Albina," said mamma, "and tell us all your disasters."

"Aye," replied her husband, "I knew very well that one of you would get well soused before you would be quiet."

No other answer was returned to this speech but a grin.

At length, the lovely bride condescended to inform mamma, that just before she had secured the last basket  
of

of peaches, Mr. Deputy Warburton's Butler came to the stall, asking the price of the peaches; 'on this,' said she, 'I clapped both my hands on the basket, and said they were mine.'— 'Nay, nay, Mistress,' replied the fellow who sold them, 'they are not yours. You have been a good customer, 'tis true, but mayhap this gentleman may out bid you.' Upon which the Butler turned round towards me, and very unfortunately knew my face; when he very civilly pulled off his hat, saying, 'No, no, I shall not out bid Madam Elderton, I am sure.' The Gardener laughed, and said, 'What do you mean to buy them from her then at an advanced price? She will axe you more than I shall.' At this I was so ashamed, that I walked a little way off, when I heard the Butler tell the man who I was, and the Gardener, on the other hand, attempting to persuade him

him that I had set up a shop in the city; which you told him, Mamma, and he believed, till this morning, or we never could have come off so well and so cheap.

“ They had a long wrangle about it. At last the Butler said he should not cheapen the fruit, but leave it to Madam; he walked away, and I continued to do the same. I had not got a dozen yards, when my ears were saluted with a yell that almost fixed me to the spot: such a hubboboo, and holla-loo was sounded in every direction, by the Irish basket women.

————— ‘ Where is my Lady come to ruin the poor, honest, dusterous Tradesfolks?—We will give her a cheap pennyworth. We’ll teach her to know the market price. She shan’t stuff her ungodly guts for nothing.’

“ The coachman getting news of the bustle, desired me to take his arm, and



and dragged me along to the coach, followed by all the mob in full shout. I got in, and he galloped off, or we should have been covered with mud; for it flew in all directions, so that I could not see through the windows. I pulled up the blinds, which was the reason why I did not observe that saucy fellow, who is laughing at such a rate at my disaster."

"Well, so you did escape ducking, did ye?" said James, "I don't know what business the coachman had to interfere. I should not."

James then told Frank, that they had been out by four or five, for the last three or four mornings, in order to personate some of the fruiterer's wives, and get cheap bargains; and now they will pay double for what they must needs have, as the trick will have been spread all over the town, and a combination be entered into against these mono-

monopolists. They may be informed against as regraters, for they certainly come under the act."

"Hold your tongue," said his mother, "you ought to rejoice that you have got such careful souls about you, who, though they wish to dash a bit, won't go to ruin you. I should like to see the bills of your fête, if you had the conducting of one."

Frank joined in applauding the Ladies, for he wanted to stand well in their opinion, that he might get a peep at the ball room.

Having eat an enormous breakfast, they began to enquire, if all the workmen were busily employed?

"All are at work," was the answer, "but the same Gentleman who waited till my Mistress came home for a fresh supply of chalk."

"Well, then, take it to him. I long to see the thing finished. It is a beautiful

tiful sight, indeed ! and such as will make all the Nobility bless their eyesight."

" Bless their' eye-sight ! No, Mother, bless you, you mean, for the contrivance."

" Come, come," said Frank, " I will be the first to bless you, if you will give me an opportunity, and I promise you that I won't anticipate ; no one shall be the wiser for me."

James said, they were so proud now that they had cut up the Queen, and cast her in the back ground, that he himself had begged three days to get a peep, and could not. To be sure, it was very pretty, and all his wife's own contrivance.

No entreaties could prevail to gain admittance to the ball-room, but he was desired to come particularly early on the next evening, in order to see the house previous to the company's arrival.

How-

However, he anticipated, in imagination, what was the shew to be seen, thinking, that they having heard of the floors being chalked, (which the Queen introduced, and which had been followed in most of the elegant ball-rooms since) they had engaged a person so famous for ornamenting floors, and meant to surprize him.

Frank returned home, where he heard, on his arrival, the whole Common Garden affray, exaggerated into a ducking; that Mrs. Elderton, after this indignity, had been pursued through Tavistock street by the mob, and that at last she took shelter in a shoe-maker's shop, where the Lady, who related the story, said her own maid saw her; that she fainted away with affright, and that the cause of all this, was a quarrel between herself and Mr. Deputy Warburton's Butler, who, knowing who she was, exposed her meanness to the  
basket-

basket-women, who then actually pelted her with her own peaches, which they took from her carriage in waiting.

While the Ladies took a little breath, Frank enquired if they heard also that a battle had been fought, a la Mendoza, by the Butler and Mrs. Elderton, and that she had closed up both his peepers?

They had not heard this addition, at which they laughed immoderately, observing that really they should not have given her credit for being a boxer, she being but of a diminutive size:— They then asked if Frank thought this accident would prevent the ball? what Mr. Elderton said to it, and if he would not punish the creatures who had used his wife so cruelly?

He replied that he was just come from Newington, and that they might be

be assured, that the ball would take place at the appointed time.

With this assurance the Miss Goodalls hurried away, to circulate the charming story, at the expence of that friend, who, if the tale was true, had subjected herself to those very indignities, in order to entertain them.

The Miss Allrights, as soon as their company departed, ran up to tell the Alderman and his Lady. Mrs. Allright said that she pitied the folly of the poor Lady, who attempted things that she had not either judgment, or taste enough to conduct with propriety and decorum.

The Alderman declared, that, though he did not intend to make one at such foolery, yet he would go, if only to roast old madam, who, in her turn, had done so by him, when his girls gave their ball in the country.—

He

He really was sorry for Mrs. James Elderton: for he believed it was her fate to get a good ducking every time a ball came in her way, reminding the ladies of her plunge into his horse-pond, when her brother Billy drove her to Carleton.

The joyful night was now arrived. All the servants at the villa had undergone a complete drilling, for many nights previous to the present; and on the last there had been a grand rehearsal of all forms and ceremonies. The quiet neighbours who resided within hearing of the two knockers (for a second had been added on this occasion) were surprised to hear them resounding again and again, tho' they saw not one carriage passing up the avenue, and supposed that some new entrance must have been contrived. Some of them, more curious than the rest, took a stroll up, to see if they had mistaken the evening

evening of the gala ; when, to their utter astonishment, they found that Mrs. Elderton, and Mrs. James, were the persons that occasioned all the noise. They were teaching their servants the genteel way of knocking, in order to save their visitors footmen the trouble ; and, as soon as the door was opened, their ears were assailed by two fellows who were bawling in the hall with all their might. What this might mean, they could not conjecture. They had no idea of announcing the names of each person, which the servants were in the act of learning to do. After having witnessed the rehearsal of the knocker two or three times repeated, they walked off, believing that the family had taken leave of their senses, and putting up a short prayer, that they might be restored to a sound understanding.

The first carriage that arrived was Mr. Allright's, nearly an hour before



fore the fashionable one, for the guests. The men in the hall began to vociferate, "Mr. Alderman Allright" so violently, that he thought they had something to say to him, and answered almost as loudly, "Well, don't crack the drum of my ear, who wants me? Don't you see I'm here!"

The girls burst into a fit of laughter at the forgetfulness of their father, who did not remember the ceremony observed at his own house on a similar occasion. He had never attended a route or ball since that at home, and, but for roasting old madam, he would not have been prevailed on to attend even his dear Maria.

Frank hurried his sisters up to the ball room, to see the wonders. On entering this, the ladies started back in affright; for they found a man lying all along; and so still was he, that they believed him to be dead. Passing  
Frank,

Frank, they ran screaming to their father and his lady, saying—"A poor creature lies dead or dying in the middle of the room. He is all of a heap."

Mrs. Elderton assured them it was no such thing, it was Albina's friend at work. They still believed, that she would be distressed when she found the poor creature lying senseless on the floor. However she was mistaken; for the good lady approached him, saying, "Well, George, haven't you almost done touching up the floor?" When to their utter astonishment, the man looking up, desisted from his employment, and resting on his hip, looked round as it were for applause. Frank Allright now comprehended the whole affair, for the face of the man was familiar to him, as he had often stopped, in passing York House, Whitehall, to admire the neatness and precision with which this poor fellow had decorated the pavement,

ment, to catch the admiration and wonder, as well as the pence of the passengers. He now restrained his laughter, having too good a heart to sport with misfortune in any shape, and endeavoured to find amusement in his ingenuity.

The company was joined by Mr. and Mrs. James Elderton, who began to look for the praise so justly her due. "Don't you think," said she, "that this room surpasses any that you have ever witnessed at the galas at the west end?" She then walked carefully over the room, in order to explain the devices. In the centre was an attempt at a portrait of his Majesty, with a large ship of war on each side, as companions, and RULE BRITANNIA, in large and legible letters, both above and below the ships. At each corner of the room were portraits of Lords Nelson, St. Vincent,

Dnncan, and Sir Sydney Smith, as the letters over the figures announced. At the upper end of the room, were printed in large capitals, King Charles's Golden Rules. And at the bottom of the same, the Ten Commandments. All around, by way of border, were ships innumerable, with English flags flying, of all colours; and below them the old song of "The Wandering Sailor," and Birds, Dolphins, and other fishes.

As soon as the party had composed their faces sufficiently, they declared, that most certainly this did surpass any thing of the kind that ever had been seen by them at the west end.

James then repeated "that the Queen was dished, he believed."

While the younger part were making animadversions on the devices, Mrs. Elderton staid with Mr. and Mrs. All-right, descanting on the prudence and pro-

propriety of her new daughter ; who, she declared, entered into all her plans of economy, as if she had reared her. “ It was she that proposed having that genus ‘man, from seeing the beautiful figures, and all that there at Whitehall ; and then he is so cheap, why it won’t cost us two guineas, for I bought the chalk. What does her Majesty pay ? To be sure, God bless her, her pockets are heavy enough ; but then she don’t know the getting her cash. We pays the piper there. I don’t grudge her tho’ ; only let others do the handsome thing as well as her.”

“ To be sure,” said the Alderman, “ and you have done it. I never heard of her Majesty’s being in danger of being drowned tho’, in doing the handsome thing.”

“ Drowned !” repeated the old Lady, “ No, to be sure it would be treason to drown the Queen, I believe.

But what of that ? We were never drowned, tho' we don't wear a crown."

" Well, well, it is a joyous night. We won't talk any thing about pelting with ripe peaches. But I have heard the story ; and we pitied the poor girl you sent to market. I did wish, as you had contrived the plan, that you had shared the danger. However, I'll put you in the way in future. Raise your own gala peaches, as Mrs. what's her name does, and snap your fingers at Common Garden."

Mrs. Elderton was all amazement, at what the Alderman meant ; but supposed that the Butler had whispered their economical plan. So she only laughed at him, and said he was always a wag.

A most violent rap now announced the arrival of some visitor of quality ; for the ladies had been so conversant with the sound of the knocker for the last day or two,

two, that they could distinguish when something more than ordinary was at the door. Mrs. James Elderton now looking about her, found poor George still in the middle of the floor, adding a little more red to the cheeks of his Majesty, to enliven the portrait, when she screamed out, "Oh! George, get out of the room, or we are ruined." "Aye, do my good fellow," said Mr. Allright, "run off as fast as you can scamper." "Run!" said Mrs. Elderton, "don't you see he has no legs?" She clapped one arm under his, and calling James to assist, they were just able to drag poor George to the outside of the door that led to the private stair-case, when Sir Frank and Lady Curtis were announced, and in a few minutes the house seemed in perfect confusion by other arrivals.

The younger part of the Allrights were endeavouring to stifle the violent

fit of laughter they had fallen into, at seeing Mrs. Elderton and her son, pulling and pushing George out of the room, who was crying out, "I can shuffle away sooner on my stumps, if your honours will but let me." However, they durst not trust to this declaration; as they did not chuse every one to know how they had contrived to be so brilliantly decorated.

In the hurry and confusion, they had forgotten to put George's old torn hat on his head, which was full of chalk, Lady Curtis was fixing her eyes upon this, until hearing a door open opposite her, she saw the head itself, looking after the hat; when she exclaimed, "Mercy! what frightful thing is that?" A ghost itself could not have created more dismay in the party, tho' the head was drawn back as soon as it was observed. However, Mr. Elderton snatched up the hat, and ran to the door with



with it. Lady Curtis and Sir Frank endeavoured all in their power to procure an explanation, but to no effect. The Allright party were in possession of the secret ; so that it was very likely to travel before the night was over.

In another hour Mrs. Elderton had the supreme pleasure to see her house as full as it could be with any convenience to her guests ; yet still more and more visitors kept pouring in. The staircase at last was impassable, and a general quarrel was maintained, by those who wanted to advance, and others who had gotten a few steps before them. The servants in the hall were no more heard above stairs. However, the company themselves heard their names announced, which pleased them. One old man with his wife under his arm, gave a hint, that it would not be amiss, if they should take care of their pockets ; which was violently resented by many  
I 4 who

who heard it. He was asked, if he thought Mrs. Elderton kept company with pick-pockets? "No," he replied, "that might not be neither, for he had seen pockets picked in the very face of the King's own majesty, God bless him.—Aye," said he, "don't you remember, lovee, as how, when we were in the two shilling gallery"—Here lovee gave him a twitch by the sleeve, as she was ashamed to have the fine folks entertained with her playhouse exploits. However, since he might not tell his story, he might scold, and so he did, till every one made way for his getting up stairs; at the top of which, they both put on their white gloves, to the great amusement of all around them.

Mrs. Elderton began to despair of seeing any of her west end friends, (as she called them) for it was near twelve before they arrived; and when they did, they were forced to promenade

menade the hall till one o'clock, when the supper rooms below stairs were opened. They had now the advantage of those above, and received much entertainment in seeing the bustle every one was in to descend, in order to get a good place, some calling over the rails of the stairs to others of their acquaintance, to secure a good snug seat, and a little prog, till they came. Many would have gone without a sight of the supper, had not the rails of the stair-case good-naturedly given way ; on which they rolled over each other, and were left at the room door screaming violently, though no one received any material injury ; for it was near the bottom of the steps that the accident happened.

After the Ladies and Gentlemen had adjusted each other's wigs, they sat down, and made the best of their time at the table.

Never had the west end Ladies had a finer treat than at this fête. One of Billy Delaney's friends asked Lady Clifden to hob a nob; which she refusing, he said, "there were others who would be glad to be asked." Two or three times the old Aldermen forgot themselves, and loudly vociferated, "Waiter! Waiter!" thinking that they were regaling themselves at some of their own halls. After the gentlemen had gotten a little mellow, pipes and tobacco were asked for, which being peremptorily refused, a little man in a yellow silk coat, with a purple velvet waistcoat, all over frogs and lacing, said, he thought how it would be; so as he could not do without it, he brought his pipe and tobacco in his pocket. Pulling out a case, he produced a pipe, and screwed underneath, was a box containing the precious herb. He placed himself near a candle, and lighting

ing his pipe, began puffing away to the no small annoyance of the ladies near him, who all declared him quite a savage, and not fit for society.

Mrs. Elderton remonstrated but to no effect. He said it was not polite in her, to ask company, and than prescribe how they were to amuse themselves. If her friends did not like his company, why they might take themselves off; he would not budge.

Mr. Allright at last took pity on the Ladies, and, knowing that Mr. Grogan was very positive, he advised Mrs. Elderton to make a party, which, with her leave he would collect, and let them quietly enjoy their pipe in a room below-stairs. To this she consented, and they went to the Housekeeper's room, where punch was also allowed, and the happiest party in the house was assembled in this room, and enjoy-

ing themselves over old stories and old jokes at four o'clock, when the sober part of the visitants were about to depart, except a few select friends, who were to be regaled with coffee and tea, under tents pitched on the lawn, and who were by this time furnished with a sufficient fund of anecdotes, with which to amuse each other till they took their departure. Many of the young city beaux were well inclined to have staid out this breakfast, but they were opposed by the old folks, who said it was proper to be merry and wise. If they did not go home then, how was business to go on the next day? To avoid vulgar remonstrances, many of them reluctantly departed with papa and mamma.

To Lady Clifden's and the Miss Allrights' great mortification, their father met with an old club friend, who applied

plied to him to decide in one of these disputes, whether it was not proper that the shop should be minded, asking him whether ever they left theirs at the age of the young man who stood before them? adding, that if ever they did indulge themselves in a pipe at White Cundick House, or Bagnidge, in an evening, they never were out of their homes after ten at night. This was a topic on which the Alderman unfortunately delighted to dwell; and he cordially joined in reprobating the neglect of business in young people.—It was such like doings as the present, he observed, that occasioned so many Whereas's in the gazette; because silly boys were decoyed from their business, to attend silly women.

The Ladies of the Allright family, declared against ever again attending any party where their father made one, saying that he always shocked them with.

with his wise stories. They wished he would take to his club again. The Alderman's Lady too was put to the blush by hearing anecdotes of times past; and, now that the honey-moon was past, she would have been well contented to have found herself Miss Moore again, and superintending Holmby Lodge.

After breakfast, all the visitants departed, leaving Mr. and Mrs. James Elderton highly satisfied with the finale of their first grand entertainment, and a house in complete confusion.

The younger Mrs. Elderton declared, she was so happy that her name would be in the Chambermaid's Gazettee of that morning, that she would not go to bed till the dear paper arrived.

Her mother thought herself very clever; but this was a new thing to her, and she asked her daughter what put it  
into



into her head, that she should be in the newspapers ? How could any body of news folks know that she had company at Newington ?

“ Know ! ” replied her daughter, “ Why I told them to be sure. I thought it would surprize you. Why I wrote the whole account yesterday, and put down every bodys’ name that I could think on. That’s the way every body does now. I should not have known of this, but Lady Clifden was doing so one day when I called on her in Grosvenor street. So I thought I would do as her Ladyship did, to be sure. I never should have recollected half the names I set down, if I had not got a list that her Ladyship had thrown aside, because it was not well enough wrote. She left the room for a minute, and so I took it out of the ashes where she had thrown it. Wasn’t it a nice contrivance ? But the worst of

of it was, I thought the newspaper folks would be so glad and thank me for the account, that may be they might give the man a trifle that I sent with it. But no such thing; for when John gave the letter to the man at the office; after he had read it, he said, ‘Very well, Sir, let me see, I’ll soon calculate the expence.’ After considering and counting over the different names, he said, ‘why I shall only charge four guineas a column for insertion. So, if you pay that sum, I will take care it shall appear the morning after the fête.’

“ John stared at the man, and replied, that I had given no orders, nor any money. On this the saucy fellow returned him the paper, laughing, and begged that I would oblige some other paper with the intelligence, if it was not to be paid for. Indeed, he told him, he had charged only what even the

the booksellers paid without grumbling. Besides, by inserting my fête, he should disoblige many friends who were constant customers. The Sheriff's Lady had a rout the same evening; Mrs. Pastry Cook Dudding too had a bit of a masquerade at Blackheath, that she wished an account to be given of in their best manner; she has given a list of her visitors, and we are to fill up the rest of the article; now she accompanied her request with a ten pound note. 'That is doing the thing genteelly; so, Sir, tell your Lady our terms, if she approve them, very well, if not, there's no harm done.' "

Mrs. Elderton wished to be noticed, so John was again dispatched to town, on the morning the ball was to take place, with five guineas, to be something above the mark; she now was in hopes to see the gala appear in style, nor was she disappointed, for it did appear

pear in about two hours, announcing Lords and Ladies, Dukes and Duchesses being of the party, that, most likely, were quietly sleeping in their beds, nor even dreaming of attending a gala at Stoke Newington.

## CHAP. XXIV.

MISS Bellingham had spent a few months with the Dalling family at Bentley Abbey, where she had witnessed much impropriety of conduct in her early friend and companion, not without many endeavours and remonstrances to convince her that she was labouring to effect the total destruction of all domestic happiness. Finding that she still persisted in the same giddy career, she determined to return to town, from thence to retire to Holmby Lodge, and there await the opening of the will of  
Lady

Lady Eleanor Levet, as the time now fast approached when all doubt must be dispelled.

Lady Delmore had paid a visit or two to the Abbey whilst her darling daughter was a visitor there, and had endeavoured to persuade her to attend to Sir Harry Cleaveland, who was himself a visitor at the Abbey, and who considered that he had only to press his suit and name the day, and the business was concluded.

Mrs. Dalling was very much in his interest, he being the very intimate and dear friend of the Duke of Denbigh's. This determined Miss Bellingham to take her leave ; she wished to be rid of solicitations that were odious to her, and rendered still more so by the representations of her dear brother Philip ; who never failed to recount all the vain and silly speeches made by the Baronet to his friends, in the certainty of her

her being enamoured, and only waiting till he could bring his mind to a decision.

Innumerable were the offers that this young lady daily received, in consequence of her being heiress to two large fortunes.

Though Mr. Gower felt disappointment at not being in a situation to offer his hand to Miss Bellingham, yet, this being the case, he determined to devote all his attention to prevent her making an imprudent choice; at least, he would set the dangers before her; and if, after this, she would not be admonished, why it was not his fault. He visited her frequently at Bentley Abbey, having a friend in the neighbourhood whose house he could use as his own on all occasions. Here he resided to be near his beloved Helen, whom he considered as surrounded by a host of enemies

mies to her future peace and happiness. Indeed he was in constant agitation on her account; for though he was civil to Lady Delmore, he did not respect her character. He knew her to be both mean and avaricious; he feared therefore least her amiable daughter might be made a sacrifice to both these passions. He determined to give her the best counsel he was able, and it was his advice that determined her, in order to avoid solicitation and altercation, that she came to the resolution to go to Holmby, and there remain till the packet was opened. As it was necessary that she should not stay there alone, she requested Lady Delmore and Miss Ellis to accompany her thither, nor would she take any denial; but her brother and Mentor must join them. The invitation was of too pleasant a complexion to be refused.

Innumerable were the admirers of Miss Bellingham; she had the severe  
mor-



mortification, however, to be rejected by many ancient families, on account of the veil that still hung suspended over her history; of this she might have remained in ignorance, had it not been for Miss Ellis, whose own envy, aided by a desire Lady Delmore had to prevail on her daughter to give her hand to Sir Harry Cleaveland. It had been whispered to Mr. Gower, that there was a secret bargain between Lady Delmore and Lady Bell Dawson, which induced the former of these Ladies, to shew so much interest in the affair.

Before going to Holmby, it was determined that Helen should spend a week with Mrs. Allright, whilst Lady Delmore went to a house she had in Berkshire, to settle some family matters previously to her attending her daughter.

The Miss Allrights were at home, and quietly settled with mamma, who  
com-

complained that they were not so tractable as she had always found her young friend ; however, this was hardly to be expected, considering the difference of age ; Helen was a child, and these Ladies were grown up women.

The Alderman, now the Heiress had slipped through his fingers, would have gladly resigned her preceptress. They were seldom of the same opinion upon any subject. The Alderman was averse to all forms and ceremonies, and his Lady was observant of all to the most minute exactness. He had been teized with these so much, that he had quietly, when in town, resorted to the club again ; his return to which had been celebrated with a feast and unusual festivities.

Frank, during all the revolutions, had contrived to be well with all parties, and now began to entertain hopes that he might, with the assistance of Miss Bel-

Bellingham, (now that his father had given up all expectations of having her himself for a daughter-in-law) prevail on the old gentleman to let him introduce Miss Herveý to his sisters acquaintance; not, however, intending to tell him all the romantic story attached to this young lady, who was still in the family of Mrs. Western's sister, who now considered her as an adopted daughter. Frank had, some months before this, made a confident of Helen, who had ever since felt a great interest in the future fate of Miss Herveý; and, upon being again consulted by him, as to the best manner of bringing about his wishes, she suggested one that met his warmest approbation. This was to give her an invitation to stay a few weeks at the Lodge, to which place she was going the following week. There Miss Herveý

could be introduced to the Allright family with much better advantage.

Frank went immediately to the good Mrs. Western, who was too much concerned for the future happiness of both her young friends, of whose mutual attachment she could not but be sensible, not to endeavour to promote the completion of it, by all the means compatible with prudence and propriety.

Miss Hervey being with that lady's sister, then on a visit of a few days at her house, made it easy to carry what was proposed into execution.

The Miss Westerns found, that, since they could not make out any story, so as to attach any thing like impropriety to the character of Miss Hervey, it might be political to be on tolerable terms with her, now that she was only a visitor for a few days, she would not withdraw from themselves the attention  
of

of any of their own admirers, and if Mr. Allright did marry her, as their mother hoped and predicted he would, why she would be convenient in the visiting way.

Miss Hervey was too much indebted to the mother's maternal care of her to shew any resentment for the unfeeling conduct of her daughters; she envied them a parent whose worth they did not know how to appreciate.

It was agreed, between Frank Allright and Helen, that they should meet Mrs. Western, her sister, and Miss Hervey, as by accident, at the house of a friend where Mrs. Western visited.

They all felt, when they met, for the young lady's situation, from hearing the whole of her story feelingly related by Frank.

Helen took an uncommon interest in her, she found her extremely beautiful, yet seemingly unconscious of it.

She was perfectly unaffected, and, as was becoming her situation, rather retiring than pressing herself into notice. They spent near two hours happily in each others society.

Miss Bellingham thought that this young woman was just formed for friendship, and rejoiced in the thought of a farther acquaintance; for Mrs. Western had requested the honour of Miss Bellingham's company to spend a day with her before she removed to St. Mary Axe. This had been planned by the parties, for otherwise it would not have been proper, on so short and slight an acquaintance, for Miss Bellingham to have accepted Mrs. Western's invitation.

Frank Allright had been always a favourite of Helen's, because he did not teize her with so much nonsense as his companions did, and she believed that he possessed good principles and a feel-

ing heart ; which she had seen exemplified on many occasions. This opinion too had been confirmed by his relation of the story of Miss Hervey, for to Helen he made no concealments, no, not even of the state of his heart in that lady's favour. From that moment she determined to do all in her power towards the accomplishment of their happiness.

## CHAP. XXV.

**DURING** the day spent at Mrs. Western's the invitation to Holmby was given by Miss Bellingham, and accepted by Miss Hervey with both gratitude and joy. While Helen staid in St. Mary Axe, she prepared the family for seeing her young friend, in whom she could not but take a great interest, being, like herself, without that natural protection, which is so desirable, at all times, to a female. She could not bring her mind to consider Lady Delmore with that degree of respect and veneration



ration that was due to a parent, though she much wished it.

Lady Delmore was herself an undecided and trifling character, and generally of the opinion of the person nearest her, very fond of novelty, and very capricious.

As Miss Bellingham was the direct contrary character to this, there could never be established between them that true regard and affection which ought to subsist between a child and her parent.

As Miss Bellingham constantly corresponded with, and always in things of any moment took the advice of Dr. Jackson and Mrs. Allright, she did not depend on the judgment of Lady Delmore, who was not a little piqued at finding her beloved child, as she generally called her, had no confidence in her, but rather confided in strangers, though these were more likely to be

self-interested than herself. Helen was of a different opinion; for, during the little time she had known her Ladyship, she had observed her to be guilty of many little meannesses, which she had never noticed in her first friends. She was truly sorry that she had been deprived of the society of Mrs. Allright, by her marriage, an event that she now saw was not likely to be productive of happiness to herself, or to the family she had entered into. She was engaged in constant squabbles with the Miss Allrights, and had come to a downright quarrel with Lady Clifden, insomuch that the families had discontinued visiting. This was not at all to be wondered at, as her Ladyship had behaved in so very unprincipled and shocking a manner, that many of her visits were never returned, amongst even the dissipated set she frequented. Lord Clifden had gone to Paris with his *Chere Amie*,  
whom

whom he brought from Brighton to avoid the importunities of the tradesmen who had had faith in his promises, until those who gave them credit would wait no longer, and when, at last, gaol stared them in the face, being made bold by despair, they beset his Lordship's house day and night. These scenes never vexed her Ladyship, so long as one credulous tradesman was left. The Alderman had been made acquainted with the state of Lord Clifden's affairs by his wife, and also with many anecdotes relative to both his Lordship and his Lady, which she told him she could not countenance, which it was not proper his daughters should witness; she must therefore decline visiting in Grosvenor-street herself, and he might act as he thought proper as to the Miss Allrights.

The true state of the family was not worse than he had believed it to be, as

to pecuniary affairs. He had never, however, heard a word of the amours which now met his ear. He had believed Louisa to be dissipated, though not vicious. He ordered both his daughters, together with Frank, into his presence, and then told them, that if ever they held any farther intercourse with their sister, they must prepare to quit his house, and live with her whose company was preferable to his.

The girls attributed all this to the starch manners of their mother-in-law, whom they took every opportunity to vex. The Alderman himself used to give ill-natured hints about prim old maids, whenever she thwarted him in any of his favourite pursuits, such as smoaking when company was expected. In short, the family were almost always in a state of snarling at each other.

By some means Lady Clifden got the news that her sisters were prohibited  
from

from seeing her. She took an opportunity of driving to St. Mary Axe, when she knew her father was absent, in order to relieve her mind of a great quantity of spleen which rested on it, and which she determined to vent on her mother-in-law.

Notwithstanding that Mrs. Allright was denied, she entered the house, and insisted on seeing her; when she did so, in the presence of her sisters, she accused her of fomenting discord in the family, which was united until she inveigled her father to take her with a promise of getting her Heiress for Frank; and also of concealing the Delmore story till the union had actually taken place.

This last insinuation made the most impression on Mrs. Allright, because there was some little truth in the assertion.

After having tired herself with abusing Mrs. Allright, she took her leave of St. Mary Axe, saying, "When her sisters wished to escape from her tyranny, they knew where to find her." Giving each of them a nod, she departed, leaving Mrs. Allright in a state of much anxiety and mortification, from which she did not expect to be relieved by any degree of sympathy from her husband, or his daughters. She retired, therefore, to her own apartment, where she was found by Miss Bellingham dissolved in tears.

She related what had just happened, and many other indignities she had passed over in silence, expressing, when she concluded, how truly happy she should be, if it were possible, to find herself in the same state she was in when they first met at Holmby. Helen said and did every thing in her power to console her, but without effect. She  
put

put on an appearance of composure, though it was evidently only exterior.

The week spent in St. Mary Axe was not pleasant, and Helen was glad to quit a family that she hoped would have been a happy one, but which, she was now convinced, never would attain to any thing like cordiality. She could not but feel for Mrs. Allright, for whom, had it been possible, she would have done much to secure tranquillity for the remainder of her days. It was not possible for her, young and inexperienced as she was, to interfere, yet she determined to lose no opportunity to serve her who had been not only her's, but the friend of her benefactress.

In another week she set off for Holmby, attended by Miss Ellis and Mr. Gower. They were to be joined by Lady Delmore the day after that on which they were to arrive, as she travelled across the country.

The

The weather was uncommonly fine, and the country exhibited a smiling scene, yet Helen did not find herself in that gaiety of spirits with which she set off for the metropolis. Mr. Gower exerted himself to enliven the party ; but instead of doing so, he caught the sombre shade that pervaded the whole.

Amongst the domestics all was joy, for every one was strongly attached to their young Lady, who, all in her power, endeavoured to promote their welfare and happiness. They felt this sentiment the stronger, because they had heard it rumoured that she would reside with her new-found parent, Lady Delmore, and that they were to be discharged, and the Lodge let.

After the arrival of Lady Delmore, many months were spent in extreme gaiety and happiness, which, like all other sublunary enjoyments, was but of short continuance.

After



After having spent a very pleasant day with Mrs. Lavington, at the Grange, on their return home, a letter was presented to Miss Bellingham, which she opened in much haste, it being written in a male hand, with which she was unacquainted, she read as follows :

“ Madam,

“ Having just received advices, by last ships from India, from my friend Mr. J. Jeffreys, whose only son is the bearer, to institute an enquiry by what title you hold certain lands, the property of the late much-respected Lady Eleanor Levett, I have given orders that my attorney, together with Mr. Stephano Jeffreys, wait on you for necessary information. They will be with you in about two days, from the receipt of this. Mr. Jeffreys claims in right of his late wife,

wife, who was Lady Louisa Levet, second daughter of the late Earl of Clifden.

“I am, madam,

“Your most obedient servant;

“JOSIAH OLDSHAW.”

Miss Bellingham's looks betrayed that some news of an unpleasant nature was conveyed through this letter. She held it out to Lady Delmore, saying, “Now what can I do? I cannot give any information.” After her Ladyship had read the letter, she gave it to Mr. Gower, asking what he thought of it? He was unable to give any opinion at all on the subject, not knowing any of the affairs of the Levet family. He saw sufficient to assure him, that his beloved sister would have to go through a contest of law with these people if her claim was not clear and indisputable.

It.

It was too late that evening to wait on Dr. Jackson, or to send for him to the Lodge; so they retired for the night, not in their usual tranquillity.

Mr. Gower's mind was in much agitation; he did not feel the least inclination for sleep; so he went to the steward's room, to ask him a few questions, knowing that he had lived in the family in the life-time of the late Earl. The Steward, on being informed of the occasion of the enquiry, laughed at the assertion of any marriage having taken place between the parties mentioned. To his own knowledge, Mr. Jeffreys had been refused the hand of Lady Laura, and that all the family had considered an overture of marriage from a London shop-keeper to the daughter of an Earl, as the most flagrant and intolerable instance of insolence and presumption.

With:

With this information Mr. Gower was not so well satisfied as the Steward. There had, it seems, an affection subsisted between the parties. A marriage might have taken place without the knowledge of the family, and, if so, Mr. Jeffreys might substantiate his claim. He now wished that he was at liberty to give her the advice which his heart suggested, and which he would have done had no relationship subsisted between them. This would have been to relinquish a fortune that perhaps it might be found she was not entitled to enjoy, and to depend upon him for her future support and happiness.

This was not now to be thought of, and he retired more perplexed than Miss Bellingham herself, who, after having spent a sleepless night, had, before morning, reasoned herself into her usual tranquillity of mind.

Having

Having determined not to contest the point with these people if their claim bore any appearance of substantiality, she determined not to remain on an estate, of which she was only the doubtful owner, but to go with Lady Delmore, and let them have quiet possession of what she might be found to have no right to withhold.

A note was dispatched in the morning, to Dr. Jackson, and Mrs. Allright, who was then at the Grove, requesting their early attendance at the Lodge, on business of much importance. They both came immediately, and were greatly surprised at the contents of the letter. It now wanted only two months of the time specified, when the packets should be opened. It was proposed to refer Mr. Jeffreys to the will of Lady Eleanor Levet, and to request him to wait the time proposed, when all law suits might be avoided, by an explanation of  
Miss

Miss Bellingham's title to hold these estates.

Neither Dr. Jackson, nor Mrs. Allright, could believe that Lady Laura Levett had ever given her hand to any one. The Doctor knew that Sir Giles Jeffreys had resided in the neighbourhood of Carleton, but that he had never visited the late Earl of Clifden. He had not heard of any proposal of marriage between Lady Laura and the nephew of Sir Giles, who, he owned, was very unlike his uncle; for he was a well educated young man, and possessed much gentlemanly manners.

Dr. Jackson thought that when the son of Mr. Jeffreys was made acquainted with the circumstances that prevented them from giving the necessary information, he would readily accede to their request, of a suspension until the period they should propose.

Thus

Thus matters rested until the evening of the second day, when a post-chaise and four arrived with two gentlemen, who, on alighting, were shewn into the drawing-room, where were assembled the family, with Dr. Jackson, and Mr. and Mrs. Allright.

The Lawyer entered first, and, making a vast number of nods with his head, which were to be construed into bows, he said, " Sarvant, gentlemen! sarvant, ladies! My client, Mr. Stephano Jeffreys," making way for the young man, who made some rather aukward bows in his turn.

When they were seated, a silence of a minute ensued, which was broken by the Lawyer, who said he took it for granted that they were informed of the nature of their visit, and that his client would receive the information asked, or that quiet possession would be given him; adding, that it was a disagreeable business

business to dispossess so beautiful a lady of the estate. Which speech was taken up by the young man, who said, "If Miss has a right, we cannot dispossess her; if not, why we have."

Dr. Jackson then informed them of the will of Lady Eleanor, and of her request; adding, that it would save much litigation to wait the time appointed by that will.

"Why," said the Lawyer, "that may be agreeable to your instructions, Sir, but not so to mine." At the same time laying down on the table a certificate of the marriage of Lady Laura Levet and his client, keeping his hand fixed on the corner of the paper for fear of accidents, he said, "Can you, Sir, produce any paper that will invalidate this?" They all looked on it, and were greatly surprised.

The marriage had taken place at St. Clement's Church, in the Strand; therefore



fore the family of Lord Clifden must have been in London at the time. Dr. Jackson recollected that the Steward could perhaps give them information if this was so at the period specified. He was called up and questioned.

The Ladies begged leave to retire to another room, before the Steward came, as the rude and ungentlemanly behaviour of both the lawyer and his client had disgusted them extremely. They saw that nothing, in point of politeness, was to be expected from either of these gentlemen. The gentlemen, therefore, and Mr. Rackrent, were best suited to speak on the present subject.

The old Steward could not immediately reply to the questions of the Lawyer, which he put with such an air of command, and self-importance, that he did not feel disposed to put himself out of his way to answer, until Dr. Jackson assured him, that his as-  
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certaining where the family resided at the time of the affirmed marriage of Lady Laura Levet, would materially tend to elucidate the point in question, and serve his young Lady. The Steward then went to search his books of accounts, which he had kept by him ever since he had been a domestic in the family of the late Earl. On his return to the room, he said that the family were residents in London at the time of the date of the certificate.

On this declaration the Lawyer's countenance brightened into a broad grin, and, clapping the Steward on the back, he requested to be favoured with the loan of that book, which was immediately refused, though, he said, it should always be forthcoming at his Lady's orders. As it related to the family concerns, no one but herself had any right to take it out of the family.

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The Lawyer took him aside, while Dr. Jackson and Mr. Allright were speaking to Mr. Stephano Jeffreys, and advised him to make his court in the best manner he could to the young gentleman; for that Miss had no chance, unless he should fall in love with her, and he did not believe that possible, as he rather thought one of his own girls had the best chance. To this advice the Steward made no reply, but walked out of the room with his book under his arm.

The Lawyer insisted on keeping possession until the claim of Miss Bellingham should be substantiated, adding, "You know the old saying about possession being nine points of the law; so it will be best to remain, eh! Mr. Jeffreys, what do you say?" He replied he was guided entirely by his advice, and if he thought proper, why it should be so.

Mr. Rackrent joined the party, having been sent for express. These two gentlemen of the law were now left by all but Mr. Jeffreys, who still attended the conference.

It was determined by the Ladies to quit the house directly, if Mr. Jeffreys and his attorney remained. This was the wish of Miss Bellingham, who herself acquiesced in the right of the Jeffreys, if it was proved that Lady Laura was married to the elder gentleman.

She supposed the marriage must have been a secret to Lady Eleanor, or she could never have left a property to her which was not entirely at her own disposal. For however Mr. Jeffreys might be entitled to the share of the fortune left by the Earl of Clifden to his youngest daughter, yet the remainder must rest in her sister, and be at her right

right to bequeath to whomsoever she pleased.

Mr. Rackrent reported to them all the proceedings, and that it was his opinion that Miss Bellingham ought to keep possession in spite of the London lawyer and his client, and still to remain in the house. He urged a number of law terms in support of his argument; but these had no avail in the breast of Miss Bellingham, or the opinion of Mr. Gower, whom she considered as her only natural friend and adviser in this important crisis. Mr. Gower was for their immediately quitting Holmby Lodge, still leaving the steward in her behalf, until the expiration of the term stated in Lady Levet's will.

This being agreed on, the whole party left the Lodge in the care and discretion of the steward, who with tears saw them depart.

They spent the remainder of the day and night at the Grove House, and in the morning proceeded to the estate of Lady Delmore, in Berkshire. Her Ladyship was greatly perplexed at the affair, which had passed at Holmby, and not greatly pleased that her daughter was likely to be deprived of so fine an estate as that which she had just quitted. Still she would be Heiress to a very good property, but nothing like what she would lose if the claims of Mr. Jeffreys were acknowledged.

Miss Bellingham believed that she should never again see Holmby Lodge, and very soon brought her mind to rest satisfied with what fortune had still left within her grasp. She soon perceived that with her diminution of fortune, she was something less of an object of adulation, and that those who had been before studious to flatter her, now ceased to make her their object of  
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attention. But she was the more sensible of this in other quarters, when she perceived the extreme delicacy with which her brother Philip shewed his regard to all and every of her concerns. He neglected his own interest to attend to her's, refusing to except of commands that would have been greatly beneficial, lest she should want a natural protector at the ensuing eclairsissement.

Lady Delmore was a woman, and an indolent one ; he therefore, being the most interested in Miss Bellingham, determined to await the issue, and having once seen her established in what he could not believe but to be her right, then to follow his own profession, and never more place himself so near her, who would for ever be dear to him, till fate had disposed of her, or his sentiments were changed.

The Miss Allrights, though removed from town, had not been silent on the subject of the reverse of fortune the young Heiress was likely to experience. They wrote the whole account, by the first post, to their sister Clifden, whom they corresponded with notwithstanding the interdiction of visiting. Her Ladyship tired more than one pair of horses, in retailing the story to all her acquaintance, and before the evening, it was over half the town.

The first house her Ladyship entered, was Lady Bell Dawson's. She pathetically lamented the sad reverse her sweet lovely Helen was likely to experience, in the most sentimental language of which she was mistress.— At the same time, she said she rejoiced that her dear girl had been able to secure the friendship of her Ladyship, and the affections of her brother.

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This she said to see how far there was any truth in the stories she had heard of their marriage being likely to take place.

Lady Bell replied, that, to be sure, she admired the disposition of Miss Bellingham, but as to any connection taking place between the families, she could not, with certainty, speak on the subject; for the situation of the young lady seemed in so fluctuating a state, that until it could be ascertained *who she really was*, Sir Harry had determined to wait, and that she was just about to signify this to her friend Lady Delmore, when her carriage stopped at her door.

This was the farthest from Lady Bell's intention at the time she mentioned, for she had actually been writing a letter to Lady Delmore, expressive of her brother's impatience to have the affair concluded; and

and asking her Ladyship's permission to wait on her as soon as she should return to Berkshire, for this purpose.

As soon as Lady Clifden drove from the door, in order to circulate the disaster that was likely to befall her dear Helen, Lady Bell committed her epistle to the flames, congratulating herself in not having committed her dear Henry so far. She considered herself at liberty now to suggest prudential reasons for deferring the negotiation. She therefore wrote directly to Lady Delmore, to say, that she was prevented by some particular reasons from making her promised visit to Berkshire, but that she hoped, when her brother returned from his tour on the Continent, all matters would be concluded to the satisfaction of all parties. This letter she directed to Holmby Lodge, though Lady Clifden had said that they had proceeded into Berkshire.

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The disguise of Lady Bell was too thin not to be penetrated by even Lady Delmore herself, who deeply felt the affront, that her daughter should be rejected, because her fortune might not be so large as at first it was supposed.

Helen rejoiced to be thus rid of so disagreeable a suitor, and now determined to remain in the country, till the opening of the papers of Lady Levet.

END OF VOL. III.















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